

THE TIMES

35P

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FRIDAY DECEMBER 6 1996

I AM AN X-PHILE

How I was converted to Scully and Mulder by Erica Wagner
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BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

20-page section of the best reading

SOUL SURVIVOR

Diana Ross charms Alan Jackson
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TOMORROW

FOOD AND DRINK

32 pages of festive entertaining
MAGAZINE

Labour MP witnessed briefing over lunch

Major moves to deny rift with Clarke

By Philip Webster, Political Editor



Clarke denied threat to resign over euro

Pensions leak triggers dispute

By Jill Sherman, Michael Evans and Dominic Kennedy

LEAKED proposals to save £100 million over three years by cutting benefits for widows and disabled former servicemen provoked a furious row in the Commons yesterday between Tony Blair and the Prime Minister.

The Labour leader accused the Government of doing something "shabby and mean-minded," but John Major claimed Mr Blair had "completely misunderstood" the issue, insisting no pensioners would lose out.

Labour is demanding a Commons vote and several Tory MPs have threatened to rebel unless the policy is reversed. Winston Churchill, Conservative MP for Daventry, has called for the resignation of William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Continued on page 2, col 6

How EU fines could add up

France and other countries joining the European single currency could end up paying more in fines to the European Commission than Germany paid in reparations after the First World War.

Anastole Kalesky, page 29

cat out of the bag when he said Mr Soper's report on The World at One.

Westminster was soon agog with the news that Mr Soper had been reporting directly the Chancellor's views, even though Mr Clarke made plain that he disagreed with the BBC's version of events.

Downing Street also moved to play down talk of a split, saying: "Relations between the Prime Minister and the Chancellor are perfect. The Chancellor feels he has been misrepresented and has taken the opportunity to put the record straight."

But Mr Major's discomfort grew last night when most of the Tory MPs who spoke in a private 1992 committee debate on the single currency called for the "wait-and-see" policy to be reversed — in spite of Mr Major's categorical statement on Tuesday that it would not be changed before the election.

Tony Marlow, the Euro-sceptic MP who also spoke at

the meeting, said afterwards: "The Chancellor clearly has no confidence in the Prime Minister and the Party chairman. The Cabinet is divided. We cannot go into a General Election in this state. Kenneth Clarke has to go or he has to be fired."

But the pro-Europeans are in an equally determined mood. Several have warned Alastair Goodlad, the Chief Whip, that there would be a backlash if the position changed. Hugh Dykes, the Tory MP for Harrow East, said: "We have an agreed position. The Euro-sceptics should not be allowed to hijack it. The Cabinet position is firmly agreed."

The most damaging aspect of the disclosure of Mr Clarke's private thoughts was the clear impression it gave of a breakdown of trust between himself and the Prime Minister.

If the BBC's report was accurate, Mr Clarke clearly believed that friends of Mr Major were behind the reports of an attempt to change the policy he agreed with the Prime Minister last April when he finally went along with the idea of a referendum.

The report also confirmed the Euro-sceptic suspicions that Mr Clarke has pinned Mr Major into a position where he cannot change their agreement. Mr Clarke was said by the BBC to be making clear that if the policy did change, not only would he go, but a number of junior and middle-ranking ministers would go with him, and a handful of Tory MPs could cross the floor of the House.

Mayfair lunch, page 12
Leading article, page 21



The Duchess of Kent, who yesterday cancelled all of her official engagements

Duchess suffering ME

By Alan Hamilton and Jeremy Laurance

THE DUCHESS OF KENT has chronic fatigue syndrome, the illness also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), and has cancelled all of her official engagements.

The news was released by her office yesterday, the day she was to have attended the annual awards ceremony of Childline, the children's charity organised by Esther Rantzen, the television presenter. Miss Rantzen, whose 18-year-old daughter is also a sufferer, recently engaged in an ill-tempered television debate with Dr Thomas Stuttaford of The Times over whether ME was a clinical or an imagined condition.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is a portmanteau term used by doctors to describe a condition the cause of which is not understood. It is defined as severe disabling fatigue last-

ing at least six months that is made worse by physical or mental exertion and for which no adequate medical explanation can be found. Up to 2.5 per cent of the population is believed to be affected by it.

Theories about the condition have provoked bitter controversy. Patients' groups such as the ME Association claim that organic factors play an important role, but many doctors believe the causes to be primarily psychological.

A spokesman for the Duchess, who is 63, said yesterday: "She made it known earlier this year, at the time of her visit to India, that she was suffering from a virus with symptoms similar to ME. She was later diagnosed with ME."

The spokesman added that the illness had no link with the Duchess's earlier bouts of

depression, which began after she had a miscarriage 21 years ago as a result of contracting German measles. She lost another baby two years later when she was 44.

The Duchess is understood to be optimistic that she will soon recover and be able to resume public life. "It is Continued on page 2, col 1

Superbug that eats antibiotics turns cure into killer

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Correspondent

TWO patients at a London hospital have become the first in the world to be infected with a mutant "superbug" that evades detection by thriving on the antibiotics used to try to kill it.

Scientists at St George's Hospital Medical School, Tooting, describe the mutant bacterium as "the ultimate step" in the evolution of antibiotic resistance.

The patients, men aged 60 and 64, recovered after the antibiotic was withdrawn and the mutant bacterium died. But Dr Ian Eltringham and colleagues in the Public Health Laboratory at St George's say that because it was thriving on the treatment designed to kill it, the bacterium could be fatally overlooked.

"Have we at last witnessed the emergence of a true superbug?" they write in the *Lancet*.

The bacterium, *Enterococcus faecium*, is naturally present in the gut and is millions of years old. The two patients, who were admitted a month apart and had both undergone major surgery, developed resistant strains of the bacterium after being treated with the powerful antibiotic vancomycin.

Dr Eltringham said: "There is nothing unusual in that. We see a lot of resistant strains in hospital because a lot of antibiotics are used. What was unusual was that we found the organism had evolved into a vancomycin-dependent strain. That meant the antibiotic intended to kill it was making it grow. The cure had become the killer."

The mutant is difficult to detect because it cannot be grown in the laboratory. So the patient grows steadily sicker, but the cause of the illness cannot be found.

Papal rebuke over women

The Pope told the Archbishop of Canterbury in a blunt discussion on women priests that only he had authority "as the successor to St Peter" to lay down doctrine.

Dr George Carey replied at the Vatican meeting that the Church of England was entitled to make its own decisions. Pages 5, 21

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Amateurs humiliate England cricketers

FROM SIMON WILDE IN HARARE

ENGLAND'S cricketers experienced one of the most humiliating defeats in their recent chequered history when they were beaten yesterday — with a day to spare — by Mashonaland, a province in Zimbabwe, the weakest cricketing Test nation in the world.

England had expected some easy matches on their visit but have now lost two of their first three games, the other being spoiled by rain.

The English cricketers, who play the game all year round, were outclassed by a team of a few professionals and a handful of amateurs whose commitments as farmers prevent them from devoting much time to playing. Mashonaland were without three of their leading players because of work commitments and one of their top bowlers is injured. Some of the England players earn well over £150,000 a year from the game, while the

Mashonaland players receive £9 per day.

England scored only 197 and 180 in their two innings and bowled badly. Their top three batsmen, Mike Atherton, Nick Knight and Alec Stewart, scored only 19 runs between them.

Zimbabwe possess only 350 adult cricketers who play seriously and 30 clubs, most based in Harare and Bulawayo. Among these is Harare Sports Club, which staged yesterday's match and possesses some equipment only because English county clubs leave it behind when they visit.

Tim Heenan, Britain's top tennis player, doubled his 1996 prize money when he qualified for the semi-finals of the Compaq Grand Slam Cup in Munich. Heenan, assured of £260,000, meets Boris Becker for a place in the final.

Tennis, page 42
Cricket, page 48



"Prince William shot him"

Traitor Vassall dies at 71

John Vassall, the traitor at the centre of a spy scandal in the 1960s, has died aged 71. It was disclosed yesterday.

Vassall, a homosexual, was jailed in 1962 at the end of a trial in which he was convicted of passing secrets to the KGB. He was released after 10 years. His funeral at the Brompton Oratory in Knightsbridge on Tuesday was attended by more than a hundred people. Page 23

US gets first woman Secretary of State

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton yesterday chose Madeleine Albright, US Ambassador to the United Nations, to be America's first female Secretary of State.

Mr Clinton also ended a logjam of Cabinet appointments which threatened to blight the start of his second term when he named his new national security team.

The President's long-delayed choice of the new team comes against a background

of foreign policy challenges in every continent. The White House also announced yesterday that Mr Clinton would hold a summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in America next year.

The nominations of Ms Albright, 59, and Mr Cohen, which are subject to Senate confirmation, were heralded yesterday by Democrats as imaginative choices which repeated the trailblazing character of the first-term Cabinet.

Mr Clinton has been under intense pressure to include women, minorities and at least one Republican in his Cabinet.

Ms Albright's nomination, which came after lobbying by women's groups, is also believed to reflect her vigorous performance at the UN, where she strongly criticised the organisation for inefficiency.

Hawks' heroine, page 17
Leading article, page 21



Close cooperation with pilots and aviation experts enables Breitling to continue improving its chronograph designs all the time. The Chronomat features a self-winding mechanical movement, a rotating bezel and a screw-locked crown. This instrument is water-resistant down to 100 metres.

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**Children's
attacker
wanted to
get even
for teasing**

written denial of this by the Chancellor, but the damage was done - Labour MPs jeering. It was one of Tony Blair's best PM's Questions.

Fans of Richard Crompton may remember another of the author's characters, Violet Elizabeth Bott. In moments of frustration the little girl, who had a lisp, would simply threaten "to: thecream and thecream until I'm thick". Leaving the chamber, the PM looked just as ready to lock himself in his office and thecream and thecream until he was thick.

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

On remodelling the institutions, the Irish noted that states wanted to boost the powers of the European Court

BY ROGER BOYES IN BONN AND MICHAEL HORNSEY

false and we are taking legal advice." The farmers are allowed to use Ivermectin to control sea lice under strict conditions provided they get consent. Only four of the 343 farms have such consent.

Ministry of Agriculture tests found traces of Ivermectin in 10 per cent of salmon sampled in 1995, but Scottish farmers said that the tests did not distinguish between home-reared and imported salmon, which accounts for a fifth of all salmon sold in Britain. Irish, Canadian and Norwegian salmon farmers have used Ivermectin.

Minister in 1961, but her change of religion was not regarded as presenting a constitutional issue since her place in line of succession to the Throne is remote.

The Duke of Kent is eighteenth in line, and retains his Anglican faith. The couple have three children of whom the eldest, the Earl of St Andrews, married a Canadian Roman Catholic divorced in 1958.

A report by three Royal medical colleges on chronic fatigue syndrome, commissioned by Sir Kenneth Calman, the Government's chief medical officer, and published in October, said it was a real condition but that it was unhelpful to make a distinction between bodily and psychological illness. Treatment should be given according to programmes in which patients are set gradually more difficult targets. These can be combined with therapy.

BY DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

THE Duchess of Kent's illness will excite the sympathy of everybody who admires her wonderful record of public life. Her illness has been diagnosed as chronic fatigue syndrome; the term M.E., which was already falling into disrepute in medical circles, was finally dispatched in October by the joint report of the Royal Colleges of Physicians, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners.

Chronic fatigue syndrome, which is a very real illness devoid of any suggestion of malingering, is characterised by a number of symptoms, many of them physical. The condition, which can be disabling, can be triggered by a wide variety of factors, both

Continued from page 1
whose hearing was damaged during military service. In future, based on independent medical advice, war pensioners will not be compensated for subsequent deterioration of hearing.

But negotiations with representatives of the deaf were astonished and gave a warning that it could stop people seeking compensation for deafness caused by other ways.

The leaked proposals show that Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, plans to save, over three years from next year, £15 million, £35 million, then £50 million. Part of the savings will come from simplifying the system, including cuts in the war pension mobility supplement, and the widows' remarriage allowance.

The cuts come from the restrictions on hearing benefits, expected to affect 10,000 people a year. A letter from

Jack Charlton, the former Republic of Ireland soccer manager, will be made an honorary Irish citizen tomorrow, becoming only the eighth foreigner to receive the accolade. Charlton, who took the Irish national team to the last eight of the 1994 World Cup, receives his citizenship for his "distinguished service to the nation".



BY INIGO GILMORE AND JOANNA BALE


THE Zulu boy at the centre of a custody dispute between his parents and his white foster mother was due to arrive back in Britain last night after an unexpected delay.

Sifiso Masango, 10, flew from Johannesburg alone yesterday morning after spending the night at an airport hotel because of the cancellation of Wednesday's South African Airways flight to London. "I'm happy to be going," he said.

Waiting for him in London was Salome Stopford, the woman who brought him up

and had wanted to adopt him, but who was forced by the courts to return him to his parents in South Africa. His father, Charles Mahlangu, said his son had a return ticket for January 5; but would stay in London if Mrs Stoford agreed to sign legal documents guaranteeing twice-yearly visits to South Africa.

He said he had managed to win over his wife, who had opposed Sifiso's return. "It is where he wanted to be. I can't tell him, 'I don't want you to go back.' I love him and I want to do what is best for him."



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Children's attacker 'wanted to get even' for teasing

By Richard Duce

AN UNEMPLOYED welder attacked a nursery class with a machete as a way of "getting even" with society after children teased him, Stafford Crown Court was told yesterday.

Horst Campbell, 33, told police he had become tired of being called a loser by children in Wolverhampton and planned his attack a month before injuring three children and four adults last July as they had a teddy bears picnic.

After his arrest, Campbell was asked by detectives to explain his thoughts as he carried out the attack at St Luke's Infants school and told them that he felt the school had been partly responsible for recent troubles in his life.

"They haven't done anything personally but they've contributed to the pressures I've had by jeering at me. They tease me, the kids at school. They just say things like I'm a loser and a failure and that."

Campbell, who lived in a flat overlooking the school, denies seven counts of attempted murder but has admitted lesser wounding charges.

In his interviews with police Campbell was said to have described leaving his flat with a machete concealed inside a bag. He told police he had also carried a kitchen knife, a washing-up liquid bottle full of petrol and two metal rods covered in foam, along with a lighter in his pocket. The petrol and rods were to be used as flamethrowers.

"I had the machete in my hand. I attacked some people using the machete, just anyone."

Asked why he kept photographs of the Dunblane killer Thomas Hamilton and of Martin Bryant, who killed 35 people in Tasmania, Campbell said that he felt an affinity with both men. "I see myself having difficulties and being sort of victimised and persecuted. So I think of sort of sharing the pressure with other people and attacking some people like I did."

Earlier yesterday a parent, Philippa Parlor, described how she had hidden in a toy cupboard at the school when her children as Campbell went on the rampage. She said Campbell was slashing at children with his machete as if "cutting corn".

"He came over the nursery fence to the children and started chasing the children around. It was like watching chickens running around in a pen because the children didn't have anywhere to go and didn't know what to do. They were just trying to run away and he was trying to hit the children."

The trial continues.

MP's mother joins critics of plan to 'keep greys away'

By Andrew Pierce
Political Correspondent

A TORY MP who yesterday advocated a ban on pensioners retiring to the West Country to ease the rural housing crisis was immediately attacked by his own supporters, including his mother.

David Nicholson himself moved to Devon from London ten years ago. His 82-year-old mother, Lucy, who retired to a North Wales beauty spot 20 years ago, said she would hate to live in a town — "most pensioners would".

Leading Tories in Mr Nicholson's Taunton constituency, the majority of whom collected their bus passes years ago, were dismayed by their MP's intervention. During a Commons debate, Mr Nicholson, 52, urged the authorities to keep away the "greys" who were moving in in increasing numbers, because the charms of the countryside were disappearing under concrete.

He said he was familiar with the problem of elderly folk choosing to spend their last years in remote beauty spots. His mother, Lucy, had retired to north Wales. "And very nice it is too," Mrs Nicholson said last night. "I



Nicholson: his mother thinks he's "a bit silly"

am sitting in my pensioner's bungalow, on a cliff top in Anglesey, looking at snow covered hills. It's beautiful."

She said she would object to any MP, even her own son, trying to stop her moving if she wanted to. "We should be allowed to go where we want. David is a good chap, but he is being a bit silly about this."

Jim Dunkley, 71, the Mayor of Taunton who moved to the area from Berkshire when he retired as a school headmaster eight years ago, agreed. "David Nicholson should pack his bags and go back to the London concrete jungle he came from. I moved here

when I retired and resent any suggestion that I have sat half asleep in a rocking chair and not made any valid contribution to local society."

Mr Nicholson, who lives at East Anstey, in his constituency, said: "I am trying to highlight a serious point. The grey wave moving into the South West may destroy the very facilities which attract retired people to the South West in the first place. I am not saying old people who live there should be moved out. I am merely suggesting that at some point in the future we may have to restrict their rights to move in."

Somerset County Council has earmarked land for 44,000 new homes by 2011. The number of pensioners in the county is estimated at 103,000 in a population of 470,000, which is 3.5 per cent above the national average. Thousands of the pensioners live in Mr Nicholson's marginal constituency.

Major Gilbert Lamb, 72, the president of Taunton Conservative Association, said: "Border controls for pensioners in Somerset is not a feasible or popular idea. The elderly are among our core voters. I don't think banning them from Somerset is the answer."

Estate agents, who are experiencing the first tentative signs of recovery in the housing market, were not impressed either. Robert Morton, spokesman for Stags, said that the majority of sales were to people moving into the area. "It's piffle. No one in their right mind, except some high principled idiot, is going to say that they are not going to sell someone their house unless they come from Somerset."

THE FLOW OF POPULATION

Migration from cities is accelerating and population growth is now greatest in rural areas at least 40 miles from a large town, a report published today says. London has seen the biggest decline since 1980, with the population falling by 628,000, close to the 648,000 total for the seven other main metropolitan areas. The 30-44 age group was especially keen to leave towns, seeking a better life for their children. Professor Tony Champion based his study on census figures and NHS records. He said: "People tend to move progressively from city centres to suburbs and then into the countryside. This is not so much a cascade from the cities as a downpour." The report was prepared for the Economic and Social Research Council.

Fake nanny vanished with baby she claimed was ill

By Joanna Bale

A WOMAN who posed as a qualified nanny but was described by her employers as "every parent's nightmare" was jailed yesterday. She had telephoned the couple to say that their baby son was seriously ill and then disappeared with him on a 120-mile trip in their car.

James and Annie McConnell called for a national register of qualified nannies and a system of police checks after Sarah Langford, 23, was jailed for six weeks for deception.

She had gained their confidence by offering a false reference and boasting of false

Nursery Nurse Education Board qualifications. Mr McConnell, a composer of Billingsford, Norfolk, employed Langford, from Norwich, after she appeared "friendly and bubbly" and well qualified to look after their 17-month-old son Freddie.

Mrs McConnell, a cartoonist for Country Life, said yesterday: "Two weeks later she phoned to say he had been projectile vomiting at his playgroup, so we rang the doctor straight away, telling him to expect her, but when we called the doctor again she had not been."

"She finally turned up at

7.30pm and swore she had been to the doctor, who had said the baby should be starved for 24 hours. She was so believable that we rang the surgery to tell them off."

Langford admitted deception and taking the car, and asked for 13 other offences of deception, involving lying to other employers and stealing a credit card from a friend, to be considered.

Mr McConnell said: "I think the sentence is scandalous because she will be out of prison in a matter of weeks. She is seriously ill and needs help. When she is released there she could get another job with children again."



Gwen Randall, head of Framlingham College, was accused of inappropriate dress

Pupil expelled as mother criticises head's clothing

By a Staff Reporter

A BOY has been expelled from a public school after his mother clashed with the head, who is the first woman to take charge of a Headmasters' Conference school.

Olivia Boland criticised clothing worn by the head, Gwen Randall, and questioned the sums spent by the school on renovating her home. Mrs Boland is considering seeking an injunction to force Framlingham College, Suffolk, to reinstate her son Richard, 16, so that he can complete his A levels.

The boy won a scholarship to the 700-pupil school, which charges £9,270 a year. He was

expelled on Saturday when his mother declined to withdraw him after the head said that their relationship had irretrievably broken down.

Mrs Boland, 41, of Stowmarket, Suffolk, blamed the dispute on a letter she sent to governors. She wrote that other parents had told her that Mrs Randall had been seen shopping in shorts and a top that might be considered revealing. She also questioned the money being spent on Mrs Randall's home. When asked to sign an undertaking not to make similar allegations, Mrs Boland declined.

"I believe a head should command a certain respect

from her pupils, but this was not happening with Mrs Randall," she said. "I do not think it is right that the breakdown of a relationship between two adults should be used as a reason for expulsion."

Mrs Randall, who is married with a teenage daughter, became head of the college in 1993. This made her the first woman member of the Headmasters' Conference, which represents the heads of 230 public schools.

John Clement, chairman of the governors, said there was "no substance at all" in Mrs Boland's complaints. Bob Wright, the school's solicitor, said: "It is sad that the pupil is the one to suffer."

£500,000 Barings bonus ruled out

By Robert Miller

A FORMER Barings executive yesterday lost her case to be paid a £500,000 bonus that she claimed had been promised the day before the merchant bank collapsed.

An industrial tribunal ruled that Mary Walz's bonus was based on the assumption that the profits on which it was calculated were real. But the profits were bogus, generated by the fraudulent trading activities of Nick Leeson in the Far East money markets. The proposed bonus took no account of the enormous losses that brought down Britain's oldest merchant bank.

ING, the Dutch banking and insurance group that rescued Barings for a nominal £1 and cleared its £830 million debt, was under no legal or contractual obligation to pay the bonus, the tribunal at Stratford, east London, said.

Ms Walz, who was global head of equity products at Barings, had claimed that she should have been paid the bonus even after the bank collapsed. She faces possible disciplinary action by a City watchdog over her role in supervising Mr Leeson, who worked for Barings Derivative Trading in Singapore.

Civil servant cleared of blinding JP

By Paul Wilkinson

A CIVIL servant was cleared yesterday of seriously injuring a magistrate who was having an affair with his wife.

A jury at York Crown Court found Stephen Coles, a senior Benefits Agency official, not guilty of inflicting grievous bodily harm. Tim Burrell, 49, a senior Inland Revenue officer, lost the sight of his right eye from a single blow by Mr Coles, 48, who said he had acted in self-defence during a confrontation over his wife Jill, 42.

Mrs Coles had left her husband, taking their two children to a house in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. Mr Coles toured the town looking for them and saw Mr Burrell's car outside the house. When he tried to go in, Mr Burrell barred his way and gripped him by the throat.

Mr Coles said: "I brought my hands up to try to twist his hand off my neck. I was intending to hit him to get him off, but I didn't know where the blow would land."

Mr Burrell, of Knaresborough, had 46 stitches to his injured eye during a four-hour operation, but surgeons could not save it.

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9006	9008	07.23	07.53	08.53
9010	9012	08.23	08.57	09.57
9012	9012	08.53	08.57	09.57
9018	9016	10.23	09.53	-
9024	9024	11.57	11.57	12.57
9028	9028	12.53	12.53	13.53
9032	9032	13.57	13.57	-
-	9036	-	14.57	-
9038	9040	15.23	15.53	-
9042	9044	16.23	16.48	17.57
9046	9048	17.15	17.48	-
9048	9048	17.48	17.48	-
9052	9052	18.53	18.57	19.57
BRUSSELS				
Prev. Train No.	New Train No.	Orig. Waterloo departure	New Waterloo departure	New Ashford departure
9110	9110	06.53	06.53	07.53
9116	9118	08.27	08.53	09.53
9120	9186	09.27	09.57	10.57
9124	9130	10.27	11.53	12.53
9132	9142	12.27	14.53	-*
9140	9142	14.23	14.53	-
9152	9152	17.19	17.19	-
9156	9158	18.27	18.53	19.54
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Residents say street name is too close for comfort

By Robin Young

ALL nine households in a suburban cul-de-sac are demanding that the name of their enclave be changed because they consider it too low-class, despite the fact that it was named after a former Lord Mayor of London.

The aggrieved residents of Skinner Close have signed a petition complaining that the name is inappropriately downmarket. The Skinner part they consider ugly, while the term Close, they say, reminds them of Scottish tenement blocks.

Houses in the tree-lined turning are worth between £130,000 and £170,000. Their biggest problem may be not that they are in Skinner Close, but that Skinner Close is in Crawley, West Sussex, a location whose name seems specifically designed to make the flesh creep.

Valerie Hurton, whose husband, Peter, organised the petition, said: "I know it seems a little snobbish, but Skinner Close does not seem fitting for this type of property. There are nine properties and not one of us likes it."

Mandy Fard, another unhappy resident, said: "It just seems ugly." Her neighbour, Helen Holt, added: "Skinner conjures up thoughts of skinning animals, and Scottish families on the road say a close was a tenement, which hardly seems appropriate." The fact that closes are, in England, more commonly associated with cathedrals appears to be lost on them.

Crawley council at first gave the residents a list of other mayors whose names they might prefer, but later decided not to entertain the idea of changing the name of Skinner Close, which has been known as such since September 1994. Councillor Chris Mullins said: "This is all about snobbery," while Councillor Jacqui Weller feared that, if Skinner Close won a name change, the town hall would be deluged with similar appeals.

The residents have suggested that the cul-de-sac be named Birchwood, combining the names of Lord Mayors Birch and Wood.

Pope scolds Carey over ordination of women priests

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Pope yesterday told the Archbishop of Canterbury in a blunt discussion on women priests that only he had authority "as the successor to St Peter" to lay down doctrine.

Dr George Carey replied that the Church of England was entitled to make its own decisions, despite "obstacles seen by some as obstructing themselves into the path of swift progress toward full and visible unity". He said that Anglicans and Roman Catholics had to "affirm each other's integrity, knowing that decisions will sometimes be made which we ourselves find difficult".

The decision by the Church of England in 1992 to ordain women priests deeply angered the Vatican, which last year said that there was no scriptural authority for ordaining women since Christ had only male disciples. It decreed that the ban on women priests was "infallible and for all time". The two sides are also at odds over papal primacy, although last year the Pope offered to seek "an accommodation" in the interests of ecumenism.

Speaking in slow and heavily accented English, the Pope agreed with Dr Carey that "some of the fruits" of the Anglican-Catholic dialogue begun 30 years ago had started to emerge. A "real, though imperfect, communion" existed in a "new spirit of co-operation". But there were "new areas of disagreement" which sadly loom

large on the way to the reconciliation the dialogue was intended to promote.

He added, emphatically: "My particular responsibility as the successor to Peter for the faith and unity of the Church leads me to invite my brothers and sisters of the Anglican Communion to reflect on the motives and reasons for the positions I have expressed in the exercise of my teaching office."

One Vatican official described this as "a straight-from-the-shoulder rebuke". But Dr Carey said there was a "remarkable degree of theological and ecclesiastical convergence" between Anglican and Catholics and that the ecumenical dialogue must continue.

The controversy struck a chilly note in an otherwise cordial visit. The Pope smiled and joked with Dr Carey and his wife Eileen, whose constant presence at the Archbishop's side has been criticised by the Italian press. *La Repubblica* said that Mrs Carey's presence was a deliberate affront to the Vatican, which is opposed to married male priests, except in a few exceptional circumstances such as married clergy converting from other denominations.

But the Pope thanked Mrs Carey "for being here". He later joined the archbishop for a colourful vespers service at the Church of San Gregorio al Celio, which houses the marble throne from which Pope

Gregory I sent St Augustine to Britain 1,400 years ago. In an unusual symbolic gesture, the Pope invited Dr Carey to wear the full panoply of archbishop's cope and mitre.

The two leaders, whose talks continued over an unscheduled lunch, issued a "common declaration" urging reconciliation for the year 2000 after a "second Christian millennium, now in its closing years, which has seen division and even open strife between Christians".

But it added: "The obstacle to reconciliation caused by the ordination of women as priests and bishops in some provinces of the Anglican communion has created a new situation." It "might be opportune" to review the Anglican-Catholic dialogue and "to consult further about how our relationship is to progress".

Anglican officials denied this meant the dialogue was stalled. Dr Carey said it was "a sign of how far we have come that difficulties can be debated without resorting to polemic". But both sides should acknowledge the "enormous strengths women bring to the Christian mission". The decision to ordain women priests was not fully accepted in Anglicanism, he said, and could still be reversed. But this was unlikely, since it was "going from strength to strength".

Dr Carey said the "hurts and wounds" of the past 450 years could not be healed overnight. But he asked Catholics to understand that for Anglicans and Lutherans, who had recently entered into intercommunion, the Reformation was "not so much a



The Archbishop and the Pope at the Vatican for private talks yesterday

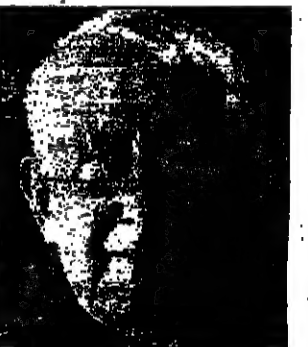
tragedy as a rediscovery of the Bible, of justification by faith, of the local church and of priesthood". Dr Carey is

making the first official visit to Rome by an Archbishop of Canterbury for seven years.

Letters, page 21

Hume calls campaigners on moral questions to order

By Ruth Gledhill
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT



Hume: obedience urged

CARDINAL BASIL HUME, Archbishop of Westminster, yesterday issued a firm instruction to Roman Catholics campaigning for more liberal attitudes on issues such as priestly celibacy, women priests and birth control, to obey the authority of the Pope.

The possibility of women priests, he said, "has clearly been ruled out by the Holy Father, and should therefore have no place in a Catholic document". He made it clear that the

Church's teaching on priestly celibacy, birth control and other moral issues must also be obeyed. He also appealed for "docility to the mind of the Magisterium", the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

Cardinal Hume issued his statement to the organisers of a conference of self-styled "reformers" called the Jubilee People, a coalition of Catholic groups. At the conference tomorrow, British Catholics on the Church's liberal wing will issue a declaration calling for changes in policy on women's ordination, celibacy and sexual morality, insisting that the conscience of the

individual should become the prime arbiter of behaviour.

Cardinal Hume issued a four-page response to the conference organisers, who claim to have collected 2.3 million signatures from Catholics in Austria and Germany in support of their reforms. In his statement, reported in tomorrow's *Tablet*, Cardinal Hume says, exploration and discussion are important and necessary. But he makes it clear that where the Church's teaching has been set out unambiguously, it must be followed.

While not seeking to exclude people from the Church, and believing that

Catholics, like all people, must follow their consciences, he is adamant that a conscience is more than a matter of personal opinion or desire. "The teaching of the Church on moral questions must be known and accepted," Cardinal Hume says.

He queries demands that the Church must "affirm" all people, whatever sexual orientation and marital status and whether or not they have left the priesthood. "Of course we must always have respect and concern for individuals... But to affirm a person must not include condoning actions contrary to the teaching of the Church."

Studies say cormorant is not the enemy of anglers

By Nick Nuttall
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

CORMORANTS are causing far less damage to fish stocks than many anglers believe, according to unpublished research by government-backed scientists.

It was disclosed on Wednesday that militant fishermen have been shooting and poisoning the protected species because they believe it is ruining their sport. But several rivers allegedly depleted by cormorants in fact have a healthy stock of fish for sport, according to preliminary results of the studies.

Scientists from Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Hull said that the birds often fed on fry, rather than the large fish prized by anglers, and sticklebacks and other non-sport species.

A spokesman for the Environment Agency, which is supporting the research with the Department of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, said yesterday that at some sites it appeared that "the birds are simply better at catching fish than the anglers".

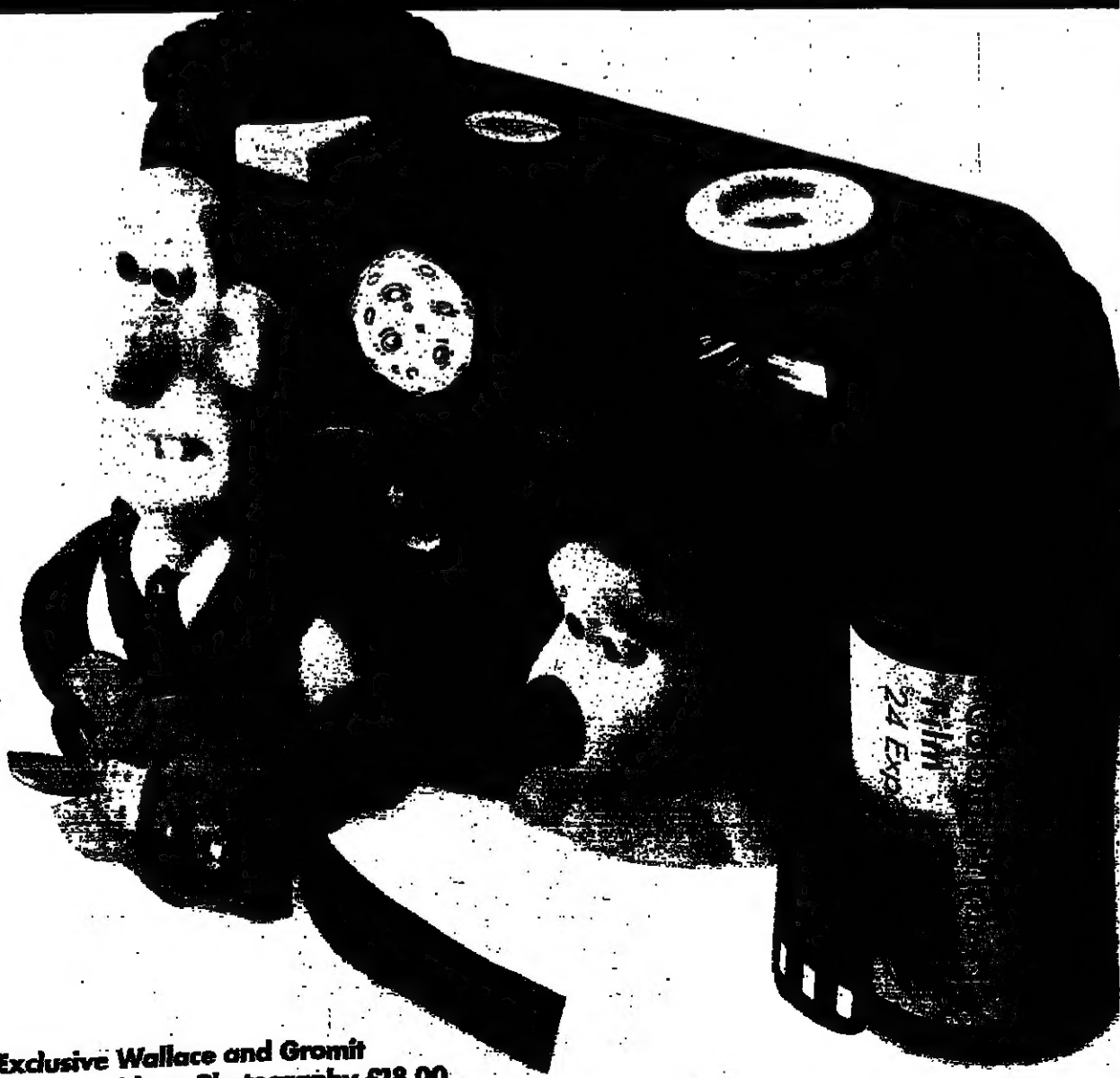
The birds can be shot under licence from the Ministry of Agriculture if anglers prove that they are depleting fish stocks, but militant anglers have been shooting them illegally because they say that it is difficult to get a licence. The penalty is a fine of up to £1,000 for each bird killed.

Andrew Tyler, director of the animal rights group Animal Aid, condemned the shootings yesterday and said that angling was attracting increasing attention from campaigners. "To shoot birds just because they are trying to feed themselves on the fish that anglers want to take for pleasure is utterly perverse and unacceptable in a civilised culture," he said.

Several fishing organisations, including the Salmon and Trout Association, have been sent envelopes containing razor blades and anti-angling slogans recently.

Simon Barnes, page 19

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British Museum urged to charge for admission

By JON ASHWORTH

THE trustees of the British Museum are to meet this weekend to discuss the implications of a damning report on the museum's internal practices.

Swingeing job cuts and a £5 entrance fee are among options proposed in the report, which paints a picture of an archaic institution riddled with inefficiencies. Sir David Attenborough, the broadcaster and naturalist, is among 25 trustees due to gather on Saturday to discuss the future of the museum, which faces an increasing funding deficit. Government grants are being reduced and the museum is to lose its annual contribution from the British Library in 1998.

Faced with growing pressures, the museum commissioned a report from Andrew Edwards, a former deputy secretary in the Treasury. While not binding, his report makes damning reading. He portrays an institution in which decisions are avoided, jobs are protected and half the employees are off sick.

He recommends the introduction of a £5 or £6 admission fee, which would raise £8 million a year, together with severe job cuts and the use of television cameras to

replace many of the warders. The museum employs nearly 1,200 warders, curators and administrative staff. About 20 per cent, or 240 jobs, could be under threat. The British Museum has an annual budget approaching £50 million, including funding grant, donations and income from retail activities.

Mr Edwards says in his report: "Many staff have remained in the same post for many years and redundancies have been virtually unknown." The museum, he says, will have to adopt a private-sector approach to staffing. He singles out the museum's "extremely generous" entitlement to sick pay and urges a more active management of sickness absence. There should also be "a greater willingness to terminate the employment of staff who cannot deliver what the museum requires of them".

Finances are in disarray. The museum does not employ accountants, relying instead on former senior servants. Mr Edwards proposes the introduction of a finance director, supported by strict financial controls. He says: "A particular problem with the museum is that, with only limited exceptions, no one knows

what individual programmes really cost." He says department heads should be given their own budgets.

On decision-making, Mr Edwards says: "The avoidance of bad publicity is seen as the most important element in public relations. Decision-making tends to be inhibited by fears of bad publicity."

Mr Edwards concludes that the museum faces large and increasing deficits if corrective action is not taken. He predicts a shortfall of £25 million during the next three years and urges charging admission as soon as possible.

The trustees are under no obligation to act on the recommendations but are likely to concede that financial management must be tightened. Staff costs account for more than 80 per cent of the annual total but includes pension contributions. As one source said: "Museum people tend to live a long time."

The museum said that this weekend's meeting was routine and would not necessarily result in radical action. A spokesman said: "The British Museum is proud of its tradition of free admission and would wish to preserve it."

Leading article, page 21



Laurence Olivier as the cinema's Henry V

Once more unto the breach, an Olivier

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE Globe Theatre is to open formally next summer with a nostalgic double act of Henry V and a young man called Olivier.

The Shakespearean play that Laurence Olivier made into a classic wartime film is to be directed by his son Richard as part of the first season at the recreated Elizabethan theatre on the banks of the Thames at Southwark.

Richard, 35, the son of Sir Laurence, later Lord, Olivier and Joan Plowright, said it was inevitable that his father's figure would loom large over the production. "One of the last things he ever did was to record the prologue



Richard Olivier at the Globe, where he will direct Henry V, "king and chameleon — echoes of my father"

to the play for Sam Wanamaker when he was trying to raise money to build the theatre. He was too ill to go out but he put all his energy into it and it was played at a meeting." The prologue features the famous description of the theatre as a wooden O.

Richard Olivier has been running workshops on the play as part of the theatre's education programme and is planning to work with City business leaders to explore the play's theme of leadership. "What strikes me on a personal note is that the play is about a king who is not just a hero

but an actor. A man of many faces, like a chameleon. There are echoes of my father. But my father was almost too close to the character that he couldn't see it."

"He loved the play. He loved doing it and he was full of stories of filming it in Ireland, falling off his horse and being shot in the legs by arrows. Henry V was the ideal king who pulled together diverse groups of people for a cause greater than any one individual, which is the perfect metaphor for what has happened in building this theatre."

Olivier's production will

feature Mark Rylance, the theatre's artistic director, in the title role. The production, with Elizabethan costumes, will run in tandem with a modern dress version of *The Winter's Tale*, directed by David Freeman, which will officially open the theatre in June. Two plays by contemporaries of Shakespeare, to be announced, will join the repertory in August.

The opening productions will bring to fruition a project that Wanamaker first dreamt of in 1949. He established the Globe Playhouse Trust in 1970 but died in 1993 when construction work had barely

begin. Last summer the semi-completed theatre staged workshop productions.

The play's permanent stage is being constructed from oak in an aircraft hangar at Greenham Common air base, Berkshire, and will be completed with the "tiring house" — dressing rooms — by the spring.

The Globe Theatre season will open with previews on May 27 and run until September 21. The box office will open on March 3. Tickets for standing in the yard, £5; gallery seats, £5-£20.

Theatre reviews, page 37

Teenager is killed while carol singing

By A STAFF REPORTER

VILLAGERS were yesterday mourning the death of a teenager who was killed by a car while carol singing with his best friend. Flowers and tributes marked the spot where Aaron Crook, 13, was hit. One message read: "I will remember your song for the rest of my life."

The boy is believed to have suddenly stepped into the road as he and Michael Cudron waited to cross after singing to



Aaron Crook hit in front of best friend

elderly neighbours in East Hagbourne, Oxfordshire, on Wednesday evening.

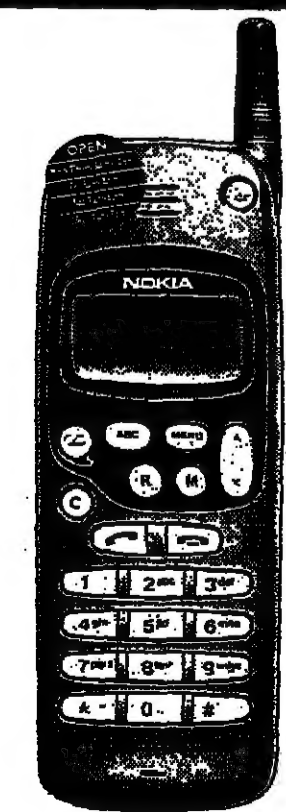
He died in John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, about an hour later. The three men who were in the car that hit him were said to be very distressed.

The boy's mother, Geraldine Crook, said: "He was carol-singing to raise some pocket money to buy Christmas presents for the family." Ms Crook, 33, had recently moved to a new home with Aaron and her daughter, Kelly, 15.

Fellow pupils at St Birinus School in Didcot were told of the accident yesterday at a special assembly. Chris Bryan, the head teacher, said: "Aaron was a likeable boy who will be sadly missed."

A spokesman for Thames Valley Police said: "The boy was apparently dragged a short distance by the car, having accidentally stepped out in front of it." Police do not expect to charge anyone in connection with the accident.

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Shephard acts to safeguard A levels

English literature and maths examinations to be refocused

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

GILLIAN SHEPHARD intervened yesterday to safeguard A-level standards after a report showed that the examination's depth and rigour were under threat.

The Education and Employment Secretary detailed a package of measures to refocus the examination and ensure future generations are taught the classics of English literature and master basic arithmetic. Mrs Shephard described the steps to maintain the rigour of public examinations as a matter of "national interest".

The move followed a warning from Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, that more pupils were staying in education longer but learning less.

Government advisers promised there would also be a "cull" of examination boards and the proliferation of courses that allowed schools to pick and choose easier papers.

Teachers' leaders said they feared the Government was rushing to turn back the clock without clear evidence of a decline in standards.

Mrs Shephard ordered A-level English to return its focus to the greats of literature, including a requirement that all students cover at least four pre-20th-century set texts.

Two of the eight topics to be covered will have to be pre-17th-century authors, including Shakespeare, after government dismay at the disappearance of Chaucer and Milton.

As disclosed in *The Times* yesterday, she announced a series of recommendations in response to the publication of the report by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority and Ofsted, comparing standards in chemistry, English and mathematics between 1975 and 1995. She conceded there was "no hard evidence that standards are falling". But nevertheless she said the report highlighted changes in course content the Government could not accept. "There has been a change in the nature of examinations and given the importance we attach to them as a national currency, it is vital to ensure standards remain steady."

Mrs Shephard commissioned the report after the thirteenth successive rise in A-level pass rates in 1995 and the annual war of words between critics complaining examinations were getting easier and schools defending their pupils' efforts. More than 85 per cent of A-level candidates were successful last summer, compared with 69 per cent in 1975. Mr Woodhead admitted the

report, which took 18 months to prepare, did not provide a clear answer to critics. But he added: "This report is saying to the Government that the danger is that more and more students are going to be educated for longer and longer at greater public expense to know less and less."

Mrs Shephard's measures include:

- Increased emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar in A-level and GCSE English and a new GCSE in English language from September 1998.
- Reduced use of calculators in mathematics at A level and GCSE, including calculator-free papers.
- Fewer examination boards and syllabuses.
- A national archive of examination papers and scripts.
- A rolling review of standards to be extended to other subjects, including French and German.

Sir Ron Dearing, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, reassured students that their efforts were being genuinely recognised despite the rising pass rates. "The demand on students remained broadly the same. That means they have earned their rewards. But there is absolutely no doubt



Gillian Shephard: the Government could not accept changes in course content

we need to seek a strengthening in certain of the key elements of English and mathematics," he said.

Mrs Shephard's attack on the exam boards was echoed by David Blunkett, Shadow Education Secretary. He said: "We must ensure that the rigour of A levels is maintained and it is right to look at re-

ducing the number of examination boards and cutting down the number of syllabuses."

Teachers leaders said they failed to understand the strength of the Government's response given the gaps in evidence and inconclusiveness of the report on standards.

John Dunford, past president of the Secondary Heads

Association, said: "It is quite clear from the report that exams today are different but not easier."

"I don't want the clock to be turned back 20 years because the examination curriculum, quite rightly, has changed over 20 years."

Education, page 35

Inconsistency in courses the main risk to standards

By OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE main threat to A-level and GCSE standards identified by government experts is the wide variation in expectations between examination boards and in syllabuses for pupils studying the same subject.

Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, said she was "appalled" at the lack of records kept by the six boards and found the inconsistencies between their courses the most worrying feature.

The report, *Standards in Public Examinations 1975 to 1995* found little evidence of declining standards but big changes in the contents of the three subjects analysed at A level and GCSE: chemistry, English and mathematics.

In A-level English, where the pass rate rose from 70.8 per cent to 89.7 per cent, the report found that candidates could choose papers to avoid major authors such as Chaucer. It added: "Most candidates are probably less familiar with the English literary tradition than their predecessors."

In mathematics at A level, where the pass rate went from 65 per cent to 86 per cent, the report said: "Questions are now more structured, guiding candidates

on the methods to be used." The level of demand on students was the same.

Chemistry A level, where pass rates increased from 70 per cent to 80 per cent, had reduced slightly in content since 1975, especially in inorganic and physical chemistry.

In English GCSE, no decision could be made on standards because there were no pre-1990 scripts. The report concluded: "The variation of standards in GCSE between boards may be more significant than any change from 1990 to 1995."

Mathematics GCSE had changed with the introduction of topics such as statistics and data handling, but there was less geometry, trigonometry and algebra. It added: "The increase in breadth meant a reduction in depth, so that there is less opportunity for more able candidates to show higher-order skills."

Chemistry GCSE was taken by far fewer candidates after the introduction of the double science GCSE. Candidates were expected to know fewer chemical reactions in detail but expected to do more practical experiments and show knowledge of chemistry in everyday contexts.

Eightfold rise in primary school suspensions

By DAVID CHARTER

A CRISIS in primary school discipline is masked by official figures, according to a survey showing a huge rise in the number of children suspended or temporarily excluded.

There was a threefold rise in the number of under-12s being banned from their schools between 1991 and 1993, but the true extent of disruptive behaviour is revealed by an eightfold increase in suspensions or temporary exclusions, which head teachers are not obliged to report.

Permanent expulsions at primary schools rose from 378 in 1991-92 to 1,215 in 1992-93, according to researchers at the University of Portsmouth, who studied 265 children in three local authorities. Aggression accounted for just over half of all exclusions, temporary or permanent. Nineteen per cent

were for "unacceptable behaviour", 17 per cent for verbal abuse and 16 per cent for disobedience. Nine out of ten excluded pupils were boys.

This confirms the findings of a survey of official figures by *The Times* in May, which showed that violence was the main factor in a fourfold rise in officially reported primary school expulsions from the 378 in 1991-92 to 1,445 in 1994-95.

Eight out of ten of the pupils studied were on the casebooks of specialist agencies, mainly social services. A quarter had officially recognised educational difficulties and 16 per cent were undergoing assessment when they were expelled.

A look at the family backgrounds of 38 excluded children showed that nine out of ten had parents who had either separated or divorced, and six out of ten were from families where there was

evidence of neglect, violence or abuse. A similar number lived in households that moved frequently. Nearly half had spent time in care.

The survey was part of a series of studies by the Economic and Social Research Council. Researchers believe that the rise in exclusions may be due to schools trying to hit performance targets despite limited funding for special educational needs.

Dr Carol Haydon, the principal researcher, said: "Exclusion from primary school is usually an act of desperation on the part of a head teacher who knows that a child needs specialist help with their behaviour." She added: "But limited practical support from outside agencies usually means that giving the right help is impossible."

She said that the 1988 Education Reform Act may have made the

problem worse, as parents took their children, and the funds that went with them, away from schools that had disruptive pupils. "Difficult children can also make it harder for others to learn, deterring more parents from sending their children to the school. The introduction of league tables for primary schools will exacerbate this problem."

A teacher who allowed a bullied boy to hit his five alleged tormentors with a ruler is facing further disciplinary action. Brenda Davies, 48, has been told to attend an informal meeting with the head teacher of Tennyson Road primary school in Luton on Monday to discuss two new claims against her.

Three weeks ago she was given a final written warning at a disciplinary hearing and told that she would lose her job if she was found guilty of any further breaches of school policy.

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New safe drinking limits 'a mistake'

By Our Health Correspondent

THE Government came under fire from its former Chief Medical Officer yesterday for raising the safe limits on drinking alcohol.

Sir Donald Acheson, President of the British Medical Association and of Alcohol Concern, also attacked the introduction of alcoholic beverages, known as alcopops. He said that they could create habitual child drinkers.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, announced a year ago a relaxation of the Government's advice on the maximum safe drinking levels, from 21 units a week for men and 14 units for women. New daily limits of four units for a man (equivalent to 28 a week) and three for a woman (21 a week) were set to emphasise the importance of avoiding weekend binge drinking. However, the guidance was immediately interpreted as a 33 per cent increase for men and 50 per cent for women. A unit is half a pint of ordinary bitter, a small glass of wine or a single measure of spirits.

Sir Donald said at a conference hosted by Drinkline, the alcohol helpline: "This was a mistake because I don't think it's based on satisfactory scientific evidence. It will increase the average consumption, which will increase the number of problem drinkers."

He said the sale of alcopops should be banned if proved to be "harmful." "It seems self-evident that alcopops appeal to those who are still drinking soft drinks. They might have a tendency to habituate people to alcohol in childhood."

It is estimated that 8.5 million Britons drink more than the recommended levels. The Drinkline helpline number is 0345 320202.

New research transforms outlook for osteoporosis

By Jeremy Laurence, Health Correspondent

A NEW drug treatment for osteoporosis halves the risk of bone fractures, doctors announced yesterday.

British experts said the findings, from an American study of 2,000 women, should transform the approach to the disease, and end the debate over whether women disabled by the condition were worth treating.

Osteoporosis is a condition in which the bones weaken as they lose calcium. It affects one in four postmenopausal women — about three million in Britain — and leaves them vulnerable to bone fracture. Most are symptomless fractures of the spine, causing loss of height and a bowed back, but there are 45,000 hip fractures a year that require hospital treatment.

In the new study, the largest conducted into osteoporosis, half the women were given the drug alendronate and half a placebo. All the women had low bone density and had previously suffered at least one fracture.

After three years, the women who were given alendronate were half as likely to have suffered further fractures of the hip, wrist or the spine, according to results published in *The Lancet*.

Dr Dennis Black, of the University of California, San Francisco, who led the study by the Fracture Intervention Trial Research Group, said that almost all women with hip fractures had to be admitted to hospital and one in five died within a year. Alendronate, which is sold in Britain under the brand name Fosamax, is a bisphosphonate which prevents the breakdown of bone. Other bisphosphonates are available, and hormone replacement therapy has also been shown to slow or halt the loss of bone.

Professor Ignac Fogelman, head of the osteoporosis clinic at Guy's Hospital, London, and scientific adviser to the National Osteoporosis Society, said the findings should silence doubts about whether there was any effective treatment for the condition. For a 70-year-old woman with osteoporosis in whom other causes such as diet or co-existing disease had been ruled out, the practical choice was between HRT and a bisphosphonate.

"This study has been beautifully done and it shows a dramatic reduction in the likelihood of fractures. Even the most sceptical clinicians should be convinced."

Professor Fogelman said that doctors had tended to regard elderly women with fractures as hopeless cases who were not worth treating. "Now that view is no longer correct. All patients should be treated."

Fosamax costs £25.69 for four weeks' supply or about £350 a year including dispensing costs. Treatment may last ten years. If all women at risk in Britain were prescribed the drug, the cost would be more than £1 billion at current prices. However, there would be savings in hospital and other costs.

Operation veteran, 7, heads plea for blood

By Jeremy Laurence

A BOY of seven, who has had 22 operations in the past two years, launched an appeal for more blood donors yesterday. Lamech Banton-Miller was born with the rare inherited condition neurofibromatosis, which caused a blockage in his main artery, cutting the blood to his kidneys. In the past eight months he has had repeated blood transfusions and had a kidney transplant in May at Guy's Hospital. He is now back at school.

Yesterday he helped to launch the National Blood Service's Christmas campaign at Guy's. The service is short of blood, with stocks at their lowest recorded level. Supplies to hospitals have been cut.

Dr Mary Brennan, director of donor services, said that Lamech represented all the people who regularly needed blood and would serve as a reminder of the importance of making donations.

When Lamech was four, doctors removed his left kidney. Eighteen months later, the right one failed and was removed, and he was placed on dialysis.

In March he was admitted to Guy's with high blood pressure and a raised temperature and lost a large amount of blood. He was put on a life-support machine and needed 30 units of blood and blood products to save his life. New donors can telephone 0181-672 2222 to enrol.



Lamech Banton-Miller, 7, yesterday. He has endured 22 operations in two years

Deadly spider weaves a new spell

Michael Hornsby, Agriculture Correspondent

THE venom of the black widow spider is being harnessed for use as a pesticide that should remove the need to spray crops with chemicals that damage the environment.

Scientists at Nottingham University have succeeded in isolating a toxin that kills only insects from the various poisons in the venom. They plan to insert the toxin into a virus that can be sprayed on crops. The poison would remain inert unless eaten by insects attacking the crops and would not harm mammals.

David Bell, a toxicologist at the university, said: "The spider produces the toxin in an inactive form and then activates it by chopping off the end of the protein when it is in the venom gland. We have been able to replicate this trick in the test-tube."

Dr Bell and his colleagues have been awarded a grant of more than £270,000 by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council to fund work on discovering exactly how the toxin mechanism operates, and an international chemical company has expressed interest in conducting field trials.

Black widows are among the deadliest spiders. If humans are bitten they suffer severe pain, nausea and mild paralysis of the diaphragm. In rare cases the effects can be fatal.

Safer way to help infertility

A third of women who have difficulties in conceiving do so because of damage to the fallopian tubes, which carry the egg from the ovaries to the uterus.

A doctor with sensitive fingers might detect that the tubes are thickened, tender or have a localised swelling within them but it requires considerable experience and ability to make sound conclusions from these findings.

X-ray examination of the tubes does not always provide a clear picture. Examination of the pelvis by the surgeon, using a laparoscope, with the injection of dyes into the tubes, discloses damage, but if there is only minor damage to the lining of the tube it might be missed. The state of the lining of the tube can be of paramount importance to the easy transmission of the ovum.



Trans-vaginal ultrasound was an advance in the examination of the tubes, but fails to expose the state of the lining.

Next week in Edinburgh, at a conference of the British Medical Ultrasound Society, a new contrast medium, HyCoSy, will be demonstrated which, when used with ultrasound, will provide a clear picture of the inside of a patient's fallopian tubes and allow any blockage to be detected within 15 minutes.

There is no anaesthetic, and no invasive procedure. Within half an hour, the patient can be on the way home. With no X-ray, there is no danger of the side-effects of radiation.

Dr Henry Irvine, president of the British Medical Ultrasound Society, says that the use of HyCoSy with ultrasound will entirely replace existing procedures in the investigation of such cases.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD

SCENTS OF WONDER.



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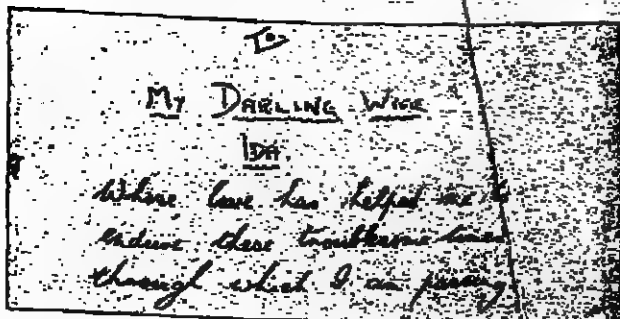
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Daughter wins fight for soldier's diary of Burma ordeal



The secret journal's inscription to Mrs Smith

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE daughter of a prisoner of war who died on the notorious Burma Railway has won a two-year campaign to buy her father's secret diary of his ordeal.

Lance Corporal Bill Smith died from beriberi and tuberculosis on December 17, 1943, at the age of 28, when his daughter was aged four. His diary, which would have brought instant recognition if found by his Japanese guards, was rescued by another prisoner.

Begun while Lance Corporal Smith was in Changi jail after the fall of Singapore in 1942, the diary's handwriting increasingly faltered as his health deteriorated. The last entry is dated December 8,

1943. "At the present time having a bad spell with malaria." Nine days later he was dead.

Two years ago his daughter, Carol Cooper of Gorleston, Norfolk, read in her local newspaper that a prisoner's diary had been bought at auction in Hull for £248 and lent by the buyer — another old soldier — to the museum of the Royal Norfolk, her father's old regiment, in Norwich. She was astonished to discover that it had been written by her father.

Mrs Cooper offered to buy it from the owner, Peter Staff, 59, a furniture salesman and former corporal in the Royal Norfolk who collects war memorabilia. He declined to sell, saying the diary's proper



Bill Smith with his wife Ida and their daughters Olive and baby Carol, who is pictured yesterday with her father's diary. "I cried my eyes out when I first saw it"

home was in the museum. Mrs Cooper approached the museum, which said that she could inspect the diary by appointment and have a photocopy but could not take it home.

Angry at what she regarded as a lack of compassion, she contacted solicitors and war veterans' associations but was told that Mr Staff was the rightful owner. Only when BBC Television in Nor-

wich began to make a documentary about the diary did Mr Staff have a change of heart. He sold it to Mrs Cooper on condition that it will eventually return to the museum, and he donated his £300 asking price to a Romanian orphanage's charity.

Mrs Cooper, a hospital administrative officer with three children, said yesterday: "I cried my eyes out when I saw the diary for the

first time. When I heard about it I just wanted it returned to my family so that we could remember my father. I am sure that is what he would have wanted; he said in the diary that he was keeping it as a record for my mother."

Mrs Cooper said she wanted to show the diary to other members of her family but might eventually bequeath it to the museum. Mr Staff said

yesterday he still felt that, as a piece of history, the diary's proper place was in the regimental museum. "But eventually I was persuaded that Mrs Cooper had a moral right to it as she was his only surviving daughter. I just hope she keeps her word and gives it to the museum later."

Early entries, written neatly in ink, tell of swimming, concerts and high spirits. Later entries change to spi-

dery writing in pencil and the news is of forced marches, slave labour and disease.

From June 1943: "I have been here. It's hellish, mud everywhere. Food shortages. Two meals of half a mug of gravy and half a mug of rice." Two weeks later: "There have been 167 deaths this month so far and the record was 28 in one night. It is simply a case of murder. The poor chaps

are simply stripped and dumped eight to a grave."

Bound in a piece of blue hessian from a kilbag, the 104-page account is inscribed: "To my darling wife Ida, whose love has helped me to endure these troubles some times through which I am passing." Mr Smith's widow, who died four years ago aged 78, did not learn of his death and burial in Burma until after the war.

Author's letters reveal a scoundrel

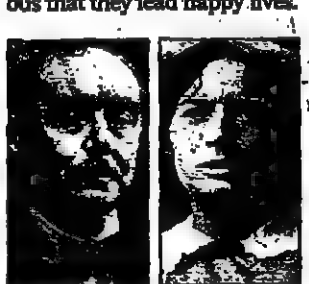
By JOHN VINCENT AND ROBIN YOUNG

H.G. WELLS was a "self-centred scoundrel", according to the woman who is offering for sale letters written by Dame Rebecca West, one of his many mistresses and mother of his son Anthony.

Dame Rebecca, herself a writer, gave birth to Anthony in 1914 when she was 20, at the start of a turbulent relationship with the novelist and popular historian. Her letters, to be sold at Sotheby's on December 17, are expected to fetch up to £15,000.

Dame Rebecca's niece, Alison Selford, of Muswell Hill, north London, says that Wells seduced her aunt and by refusing for most of his life to acknowledge their son contributed to Anthony becoming "a bend in human form".

Mrs Selford, 76, daughter of Dame Rebecca's sister Winifred, said yesterday: "Do not think because people are famous that they lead happy lives."



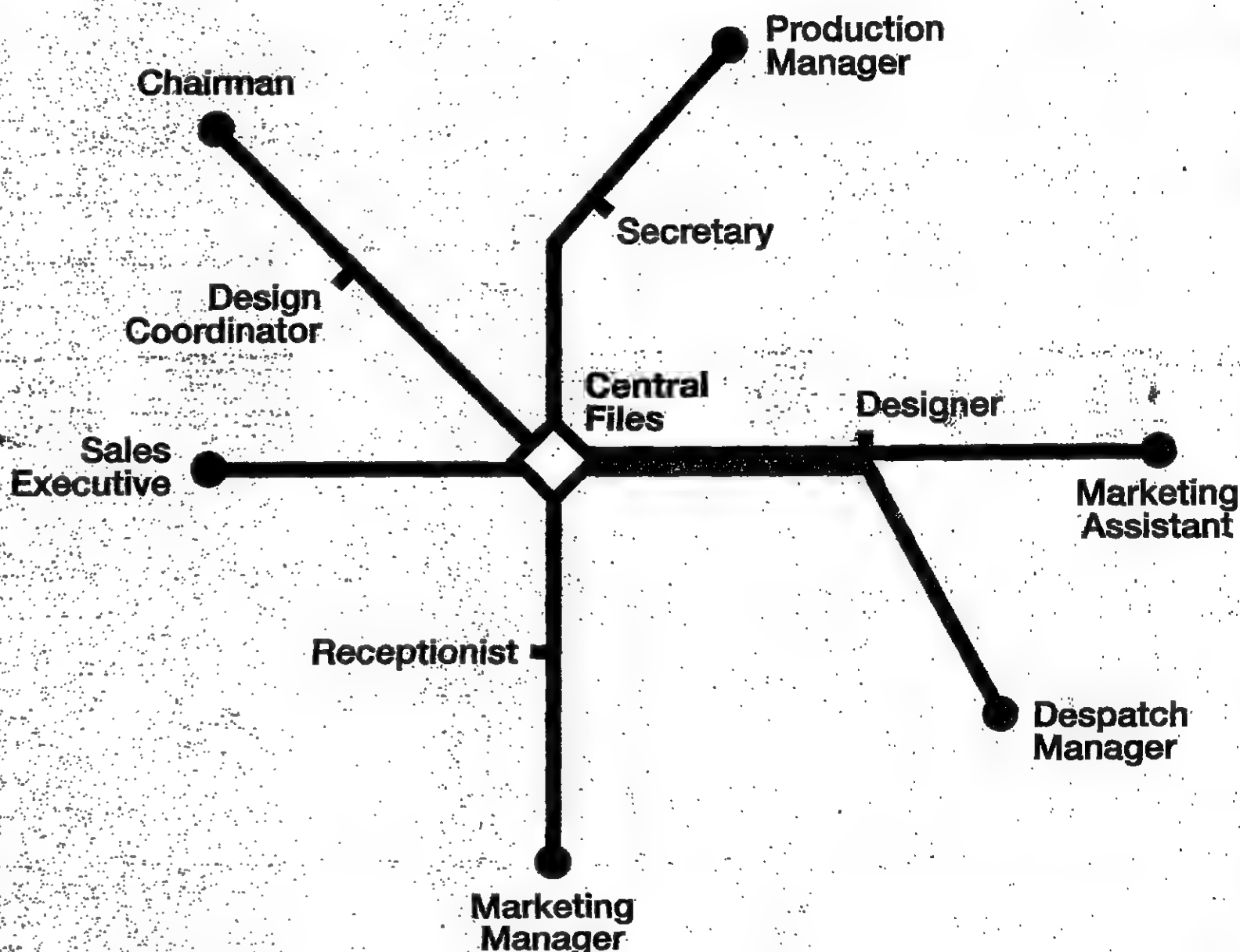
H.G. Wells and West: turbulent relationship

They do not." She added: "Wells's refusal to acknowledge Anthony had a terrible effect on the boy."

In more than 500 letters that Mrs Selford is selling, Dame Rebecca frequently refers to Wells in disparaging terms. In 1923 she writes: "I've had two other letters from H.G. of the most amazing abusive sort. I've felt his hatred of my work for a year or two now — and of course the accusations of laziness are frequent — particularly when I'm ill or dead with overwork." In 1949, she was surprised at a proposal that a forthcoming book should disclose that Wells was father of her son. She persuaded Anthony to suppress the fact.

From the 1920s onwards she brooded over her son's obvious unhappiness and deteriorating behaviour. In one letter she says: "As for Anthony, he appears to be quite mad." In another: "... it is the meanest thing he could do — and so terribly like H.G."

Rebecca West also discloses in the letters that she had an affair with Charlie Chaplin. "I never told anybody but when I was out in Los Angeles in 1924 Charlie made violent love to me and asked me to marry him. He told me he was pressing me so hard to live with him then, because he had suddenly become terrified of impotence."



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Patten gives colony firm pledge on passports

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

CHRIS PATTEN, the Governor of Hong Kong, said yesterday that it would be "impudent" of Peking to threaten almost 140,000 people in Hong Kong who were given British passports in 1990 to provide reassurance after the 1989 Tiananmen Square killings.

Speaking to an extraordinary meeting of the Legislative Council, Mr Patten staked British and his personal honour by guaranteeing that Britain will recognise fully the British Nationality Selection Scheme passport, now and after the transfer of sovereignty next summer.

It is indistinguishable from his own passport, Mr Patten said, waving it at the chamber. If what he said was not true, he added, "you can find me wherever I am and hang my words around my neck".

The Governor had summoned the council to defuse mounting panic here that tens of thousands of people who accepted the BNSS passport would be abandoned because Peking did not recognise the document. "I came as quickly

as possible," he said. "This is the right place to deal with these anxieties."

Mr Patten dealt with widespread suspicions of treachery within the Government. One council member raised the possibility that Lawrence Leung, the Director of Information until his sudden retirement in July, had provided the Chinese with the names of thousands of holders of the disputed passports. Mr Leung's background is under investigation by a Legislative Council select committee. The Governor insisted that he had no evidence of such treachery and said: "I have no reason to suspect the Chinese have such a list of names."

Despite assurances earlier in the week from the Governor, Anson Chan, the Chief Secretary, and the Foreign Office in a message sent on Wednesday at Mr Patten's behest, many here remained convinced that a senior British official's statement meant that the 1990 British Nationality Selection Scheme passports, given to 50,000 heads of families and their dependants,



Chris Patten stakes his honour yesterday on the value Britain places on the 140,000 Hong Kong passports

would not ensure consular protection.

Francis Cornish, the Senior British Trade Commissioner here, who is also the senior Foreign Office representative, had said on Tuesday that consular protection would not be offered to BNSS passport-holders because Peking regarded them as Chinese. Peking has dismissed the passport as a British political trick, and on Wednesday a Chinese official in the colony

said of its holders: "If their BNSS identities are successfully traced, they would no longer be regarded as foreign nationals."

An angry Mr Patten said: "What would China think if Britain decided who was Chinese? They'd think it was a monstrous impudence." He urged Peking's "po-faced" allies in the council to tell China such statements create anxiety in Hong Kong.

Nobody can tell Britain who

is a British citizen, Mr Patten said. "All British passports look alike," he said. No consul will ask how it was obtained.

There is an international convention, the Governor explained, which holds that those with dual citizenships cannot expect "formal" consular protection from one country when they are in the other. "But they will still get assistance," he said. A mere statement from Peking that possession of a BNSS passport

is proof of dual nationality, the Governor assured the council. "Is not evidence".

Without such evidence, for example a Chinese passport, Britain would consider as unquestionably British all BNSS passport-holders. Mr Patten warned Peking that, if it persisted in defining unilaterally those whose foreign passports are valid "after 1997", there will be a large number of arguments with foreign countries.

Chinese general gets red-carpet welcome to US

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

IN AN unprecedented goodwill gesture to Peking, the United States is extending its full diplomatic red carpet to General Chi Haotian, China's Minister of National Defence, who arrived for a ten-day visit to America last night.

General Chi, who commanded the army during the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 and earned his stripes fighting American soldiers on the Korean peninsula, will be granted an honour guard welcome by William Perry, the Defence Secretary, at the Pentagon on Monday. He is also expected to meet President Clinton.

Today he will visit West Point, the army academy outside New York. Next week General Chi will be given tours of the naval installations at Norfolk, Virginia, of Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, Fort Hood Army Headquarters in Texas, and the Sandia National Military Laboratory in New Mexico. Then his delegation will be flown to Hawaii to meet the US Pacific Command.

Such a reception would have been inconceivable in the immediate aftermath of Tiananmen Square when hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators were killed by the general's troops. His visit to the United States was delayed twice last year after the most serious deterioration

in relations between the two powers over Taiwan.

The visit is certain to provoke renewed criticism of Mr Clinton's policy of engagement with China from Republicans in Congress. They were the most vocal proponents of the decision to grant a visa to President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan last spring, a move which precipitated a downward spiral in relations and led to Peking's military exercises off the Far Eastern island.

Republicans have since criticised Mr Clinton for not taking a tougher line against the Chinese authorities over human rights violations and missile sales to rogue nations. However, the visit by General Chi was viewed by the White House yesterday as the most tangible sign that Sino-American relations were finally on the mend and, followed by a proposed series of meetings between Mr Clinton and President Jiang Zemin of China, would create a climate of greater warmth between the countries.

Among the key issues which will dominate discussions in Washington will be the Clinton Administration's wish to secure permission for American naval vessels to continue making port calls in Hong Kong after the British colony reverts to Chinese control next summer.

French fight mutineers in Bangui

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRENCH troops fought rebels on the streets of Bangui yesterday as an army mutiny in the Central African Republic escalated and foreigners began fleeing the capital.

The uprising, which started on November 16 over army pay, has since intensified into a full-scale rebellion, with overtones of tribal violence, against President Patasse and his French backers.

French troops began evacuating foreign nationals yesterday as rebel shells landed on the capital's main hotel and French tanks took up positions at the presidential palace and national radio station.

The mutineers fired mortars into the city centre and about 400 rebels sought to break out of strongholds in the south and west of the capital. At least two soldiers were killed in the fighting between the mutineers and the French-supported presidential guard. France has 1,500 troops and military advisers in its former colony.

Netanyahu defiant on settlements

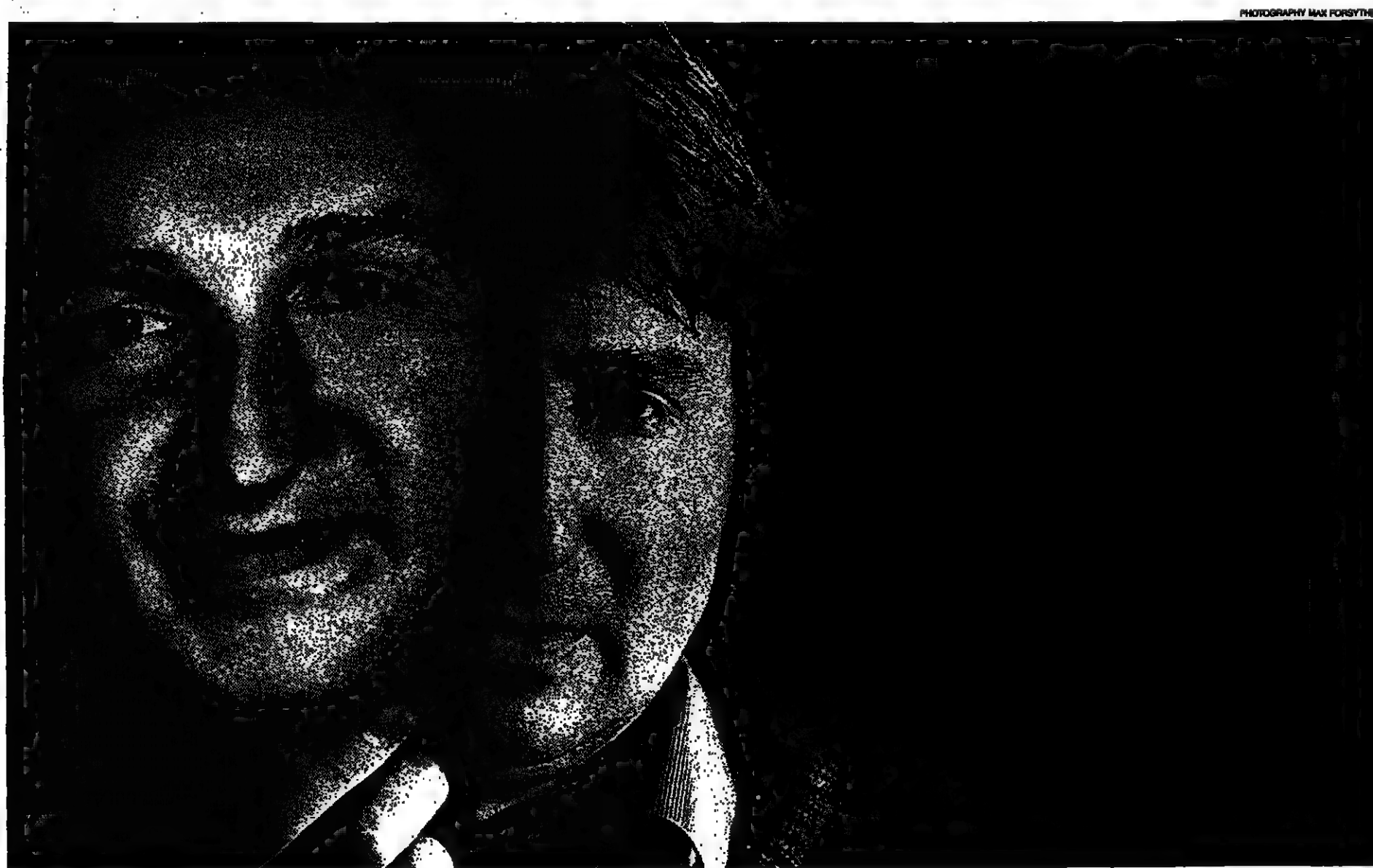
FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

IN DEFIANCE of Arab, European and American criticism, Israel said yesterday that permission had been given for hundreds more Jews to live in the occupied West Bank and many Israelis now wanted to move there.

David Bar-Ilan, a senior adviser to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, told Israel radio that Jews could now occupy 200 empty housing units in the settlement of Kedumim, near the largest West Bank Palestinian city of Nablus. He said 100 additional units were being built there, with planning permission sought for 200 more.

The official justified the decision to revoke the ban imposed by the previous Labour Government as being necessary to allow for the "natural growth of the settlement".

Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, said that the move violated the 1993 peace accords.



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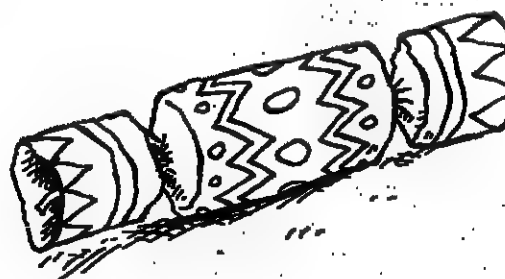
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French Pretender sells off family heirlooms



The present Comte de Paris, a would-be king in waiting, at Chantilly in 1986

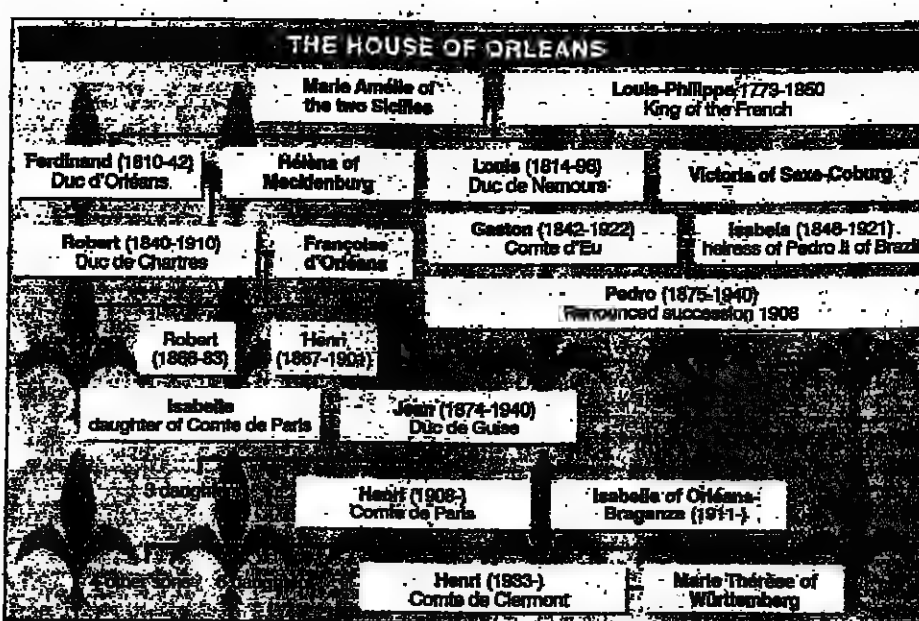
FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

THE Pretender to the French throne will sell off hundreds of family heirlooms next week after a bitter court battle in which his children accused him of plundering their inheritance.

Henri d'Orléans, Comte de Paris, 83, a direct descendant of Hugues Capet, the founder of France's 1,000-year-old Capetian dynasty, announced three years ago that he intended to sell the contents of his former home in Portugal, sparking furious opposition from five of his nine surviving children.

Four days before the intended sale in 1993, the children (aged in their 50s and 60s) filed a lawsuit claiming that the Comte and his wife were "squandering family souvenirs" of emotional value. After a lengthy legal tussle, however, France's court of appeal has given the sale the go-ahead.

On December 14 and 15, Sotheby's in Monaco will auction 400 lots from the collection, including portraits, jewellery, furniture, china and books. The sale is expected to raise up to £18 million for the Old Pretender's coffers, but it has led to the most serious



split in the fractious French royal family since 1948, when the Comte disinherited his eldest son, Henri, for divorcing and marrying a divorcée. This week the Comte said that the dispute had left him with a "profound feeling of anger", and he singled out the children, complete with titles, who had dared to oppose his royal will: "Henri, Comte de Clermont — who has since renounced his title — Jacques, Duc d'Orléans, Michel,

Comte d'Evreux, Isabelle, Comtesse Frédéric Carl de Schoenborn-Buchheim, and Hélène, Comtesse Evrard de Limbourg-Stürm." The eccentric patriarch, who claimed that President de Gaulle had suggested he succeed him as head of state in 1965, has made no secret of his wanting the cash to maintain "a certain way of life". "Our house keeps up appearances better than in Great Britain, where the royal image

is really sad and pathetic," the Comte, who has never renounced his right to the French throne, told *Paris-Match* magazine this week. The last King of France was the Orléanist Louis-Philippe, who abdicated in 1848. While popular among Catholic traditionalists, the House of Orléans is widely seen in France as an entertaining but irrelevant anachronism. The Comte said he would also use the sale's proceeds to continue bringing out the monarchist "monthly bulletin" he founded in 1948, and to "leave something for the children".

Precisely which children is unclear, since the Comte de Paris, in another sign that his family is somewhat less than close-knit, admits he does not know how many grandchildren or great-grandchildren he has, and does not much care. "Frankly, it's only the boys that interest me. The monarchist tradition is founded on male succession... In the area of succession it is vital to maintain this principle," he said.

He noted, however, that his sons had all opposed his selling off bits of the family heritage, while four of his daughters had "affectionately rallied round". The unseemly feud is a further setback to the tiny minority of French people who cling to the quixotic notion that the monarchy might one day be restored.

However, the Pretender says: "What do you expect? When you have 11 children, there are always some who

disagree. Things look fairly favourable for the House of France at the moment," he added, with an optimism undimmed by republicanism and undiluted by realism.

Sotheby's has defended the sale, pointing out that the family has often sold artworks. "After the death of the Grand Dauphin, the son of Louis XIV who was an important collector, most of his collection was sold by the Duc de Berry," points out Alexandre Pradère of Sotheby's.

The majority of the royal family's artworks have already been presented by the Comte to a foundation promoting the "monarchical ideal". Items on sale next week come from the former royal residence, Quirinal, where the family lived from the end of the Second World War until 1950, when the claims to the French throne were allowed back into France. The Portuguese house was sold in 1955.

The most important artwork up for auction is an 1842 portrait of the Comte de Paris by Franz-Xaver Winterhalter, valued at Fr300,000, to Fr500,000 (£37,500 to £62,500). The portrait has been declared a national treasure and so can be sold only to a French collector.

A set of six Empire armchairs that once belonged to the statesman Talleyrand is also on sale with an estimated value of Fr300,000.

The collection is of greater historical than artistic importance, according to experts, but for France's die-hard monarchists the auction is an opportunity to obtain, say, a book bearing the royal fleur-de-lis for as little as Fr2,000.

While the courts have allowed the sale, the Comte's children, have launched yet another appeal, which, if upheld, could lead to fresh legal claims after the collection has been dispersed. The undignified spectacle of the royal house of Orléans bickering over who gets the family silver has not been lost on the sons and daughters of the French Revolution.

As *Le Figaro* pointed out wryly: "It is a sad joke to see this younger branch of the Capetian dynasty putting such great faith in republican justice to sort out their internal squabbles."

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Juppé's popularity tumbles as woes multiply in France

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

TOYS worth more than £20,000 intended as Christmas presents for the children of Alain Juppé's staff have been stolen, capping a bruising fortnight of misfortune, miscalculation and misery for the French Prime Minister.

Nothing is going M Juppé's way. The paralysing French lorry drivers' strike has been followed in quick succession by the terrorist bombing of a commuter train and the botched privatisation of the defence giant, Thomson SA.

The divided centre-right coalition is baying for blood, the long-established "franc fort" policy is being openly questioned, France's drive for a single currency is under threat, and M Juppé's popularity has reached the lowest ebb of any leader in modern French history.

Wits have interpreted the theft of the 3,000 Christmas packages as a sign that even Father Christmas has it in for the Prime Minister, but the sea of troubles now swamping M Juppé is mostly of his own making.

On Wednesday the Government halted the sale of Thomson after an independent privatisation commission refused to approve the sale of its electronics branch to a South Korean company. M Juppé had approved the deal before consulting the commission, and his characteristically blunt assertion that Thomson was worthless ignited the fury of its workers.

Korea has demanded an explanation for the U-turn amid allegations of racism: Thomson workers are celebrating victory and even the



Juppé swamped by a sea of troubles

Government's allies are wondering how a deal that seemed sealed last week has collapsed.

"This is just one more shambles," complained François-Michel Gonnat, the Gaullist chairman of the parliamentary committee on trade and industry.

The concessions to striking lorry drivers have already provoked similar demands for early retirement and wage rises in other sectors, and oil industry unions have called for a strike next week.

Tuesday's bomb on a crowded commuter train, which killed two people and injured dozens, has dealt another blow to the government's confidence a year after it claimed to have beaten back the threat of Islamic terrorism.

Shares in department stores have tumbled as machine-gun-carrying police and soldiers patrol shops, stations and airports and France faces the prospect of a Christmas period blighted by fear of further attacks. Officials maintain

that Tuesday's bombing could not have been anticipated, but according to French newspapers the Government had received a number of recent intelligence reports warning that Paris was once again the target of Algerian Islamic militants.

M Juppé's domestic political woes are scarcely less explosive. His plans to cap a wealth tax for the very rich and bring in tougher anti-racism laws are foundering amid strong opposition from his own party, but perhaps most threatening is the growing debate over the policy of linking the franc to the deutschmark, a central tenet of government thinking for more than a decade.

Officials predict a major reshuffle in the new year, but Elysée insiders say President Chirac is not yet ready to drop his prime minister. Some of the most savage criticism has come from the ranks of the ruling Gaullist RPR party, of which M Juppé is the head.

In a recent newspaper interview, M Juppé declared that he intended to lead the party into the 1998 elections and then quit. For many observers the suggestion that he might be able to hang on for so long appeared wildly unrealistic.

Corruption inquiry: An investigating magistrate struck at the heart of an alleged covert funding system for the RPR party by ordering the arrest of the movement's former personnel chief, Louise-Yvonne Casetta, who was regarded as the party's shadow treasurer, was detained for questioning over suspected corruption, justice sources said. (Reuters)



Sadao Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, top, at the conference with Bosnian leaders Alija Izetbegovic, left, and Kresimir Zubak

Milosevic pays up to quell protests

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN BELGRADE

THE Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, yesterday appeared to be taking steps to quell popular anger, which has brought demonstrators on to the streets of Belgrade for the past 17 days.

He showed no sign, however, of caving in to the protesters' demands that he recognise the results of last month's municipal elections, which gave a resounding victory to opposition parties in almost every major Serbian town. The electoral commission cited unspecified irregularities and state-controlled courts annulled the results.

Local media reported that Mr Milosevic's Socialist Government had introduced a series of measures designed to appease popular discontent by lowering state electricity bills and paying pensioners who have not received state cheques since September. Students, who have led the crusade against the Government, were promised larger grants.

The independent Belgrade radio station, Radio B-92, went back on the air after Serbian authorities came under severe international criticism for shutting it down. The student radio station, Radio Index, also went back on the air yesterday.

"I think Milosevic wants out of this storm," said Mihal Markovic, a former advisor to the President and former head of the Serbian Socialist Party.

The Government began purging unpopular officials from its ranks. State television announced the resignation of Mile Ilie, the president of the Socialist Party in the town of Nis. He has been blamed by opposition parties for manipulating election results there. Aleksandr Tijanic, the Information Minister, resigned.

Bosnia tribunal boost

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH police officers assigned to The Hague international tribunal investigating war crimes in the former Yugoslavia could be sent to Bosnia-Herzegovina to try to trace the 67 indicted war criminals still at large.

With the promise of more international help, offered yesterday at the end of a two-day conference on Bosnia in London, the tribunal is expected to expand operations.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said he would

be "extremely dissatisfied" if General Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb army commander, and Radovan Karadzic, former president of the Bosnian Serbs, as well as other indicted war criminals had not been dealt with within the next 12 months.

Despite the added resources, however, the conference communiqué made it clear that the responsibility for arresting the indicted war criminals remained with the local police.

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Spanish dolls take a beating

Madrid: A doll depicting a boy with a black eye, missing teeth and a gashed cheek sparked outrage among Spanish children's rights groups yesterday. (Yonku Varadarajan writes). Priced at 1,000 pesetas (£5), and aimed at three-year-olds to six-year-olds, the doll is selling briskly. Another version, with the boy's bruised head serving as the top half of a flask of cologne, is doing less well.

Prodeni, Spain's leading child protection society, said it glamorised child abuse. However, Miguel Rodriguez, the manufacturer, asked: "Who says it represents an abused child and not one who has fallen down stairs?"



The dolls that have upset children's rights groups

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Nazis 'smuggled gold in Swiss diplomatic bags'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

SWISS bankers used diplomatic pouches to smuggle Nazi gold and securities into Argentina, including a £13 million retirement fund for Hermann Goering, the Luftwaffe commander and one of Hitler's closest henchmen, according to secret papers.

A State Department memorandum of December 1946, made public for the first time yesterday, reported that before the German surrender, Goering, Joseph Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, and other senior Nazis had tried to transfer "securities, bullion and cash" out of Europe secretly.

The memorandum from Laurence Frank, the US Consul in Austria, was released by Alfonso D'Amato, the New York Republican senator whose banking committee is investigating whether billions of pounds belonging to Holocaust victims may still be hidden in Swiss bank vaults. The World Jewish Congress has alleged that up to \$7 billion (£4.3 billion) belonging to Jews killed in the Holocaust

remained in Swiss banks after 1945.

Goering and Goebbels first moved money to Geneva in diplomatic bags which could not be inspected. "It is reported that Reichsmarshal Goering later used this method to transfer personal funds," Frank's report stated. "According to these reports, Goering previously sent more than \$20 million of his personal fortune to Argentina."



Peron: may have helped to open secret accounts

Goering also used a submarine to ship part of his fortune to Argentina in the summer of 1943, the memo said. Goebbels placed \$13 million in a safety deposit box in a German-controlled bank in Buenos Aires, where Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Foreign Minister, also secreted a large sum.

These disclosures followed the release of papers from the US Embassy in Buenos Aires earlier this week, showing that the Nazis secretly sent more than \$1 billion to Argentina in the last month of the war and scoured the world for sanctuaries for their plundered wealth.

Argentina, which harboured numerous Nazi war criminals — such as Adolf Eichmann, one of the architects of the Holocaust, and Erich Priebke, the former SS captain extradited to Italy last year — has meanwhile been pitched further into the controversy. It was reported that Eva Peron may have conspired with the Nazis to set up secret accounts on behalf of her

husband to hide hundreds of millions of dollars obtained from looted Nazi gold, cash and art treasures.

Although the memo said the Swiss Government was probably unaware of the role that Swiss bankers and businessmen played in aiding the Nazis, Mr D'Amato also released a letter that he has sent to Carlo Jäggi, the Swiss Ambassador, demanding an explanation.

"I am amazed by a passage in the document which states that Swiss bankers were entrusted to conduct diplomatic missions to South America," he said. "My great fear is that it was these bankers who were allowed to carry on such missions that were facilitating the transfer of Nazi loot to Argentina and beyond."

Geneva: An independent panel will investigate the Washington reports, Thomas Borer, a Swiss Foreign Ministry official, said. The Government had no knowledge of the allegations, he added. (AP)

Bernard Levin, page 11



A protester makes a peace sign after South African police fired teargas and stun grenades yesterday at hundreds of Zulus, some armed with handguns and traditional weapons, demonstrating on the East Rand over eviction from a township. About 800 residents associated with the Inkatha Freedom Party in the township

Clashes at Zulu protest

of Thokoza had started marching towards council offices in the nearby town of Alberton after chasing away officials who tried to serve eviction notices (Inigo Gilmore writes). The residents fired shots before police cordoned off roads

when Inkatha supporters occupied them. Since then the township has been divided, with ANC supporters living in one half and Inkatha supporters in the other.

The proposed evictions were part of a plan to rebuild the township. Local officials said they would continue to press for evictions.

Afghan 'puppet' dies in Moscow

FROM RICHARD BRESTON IN MOSCOW

BABRAK KARMAL, the former Afghan leader who helped to trigger the ill-fated Soviet invasion of his country but was later deposed by the Kremlin, has died in exile at a Moscow hospital.

The 67-year-old former Communist leader is reported to have died from liver cancer, on Tuesday at the Kremlin's Central Clinical Hospital. His body is expected to be returned to northern Afghanistan for burial.

Mr Karmal, the son of a general and a member of the Afghan elite, emerged as a political figure in the 1960s when he won a reputation as a fiery Communist orator and went on to found the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

When the party seized power in 1978, he lost ground in the rivalries within the Communist leadership and was posted as Ambassador to Prague by the new Afghan dictator, Hafizullah Amin. However, Mr Karmal was chosen as the Kremlin's puppet figure when Amin was murdered and Soviet forces invaded.

Obituary, page 25

Farmers urged to end Greek blockade

FROM REUTER IN ATHENS

COSTAS SIMITIS, the Greek Prime Minister, appealed to thousands of farmers yesterday to end a crippling eight-day blockade of road and rail links, saying it was posing a serious threat to the economy.

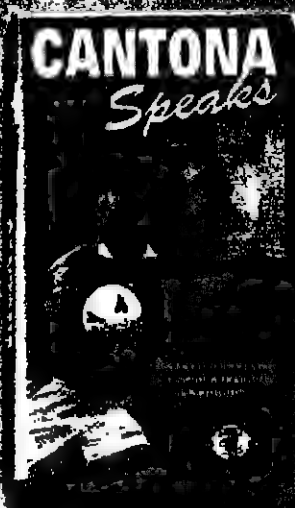
Among those caught up in the dispute are foreign lorry drivers, including about 40 from Britain stranded at Patras, Greece's third largest harbour.

In his first public comments since the farmers began their action last Thursday, Mr Simitis said in a televised address: "The taking over of national roads and paralyzing of transport are putting an unbearable cost on the economy. The takeovers harm vital interests of other sectors. They violate the rights of our citizens, and endanger the labour and income of other workers."

He appealed to farmers, who have blocked land links to Greece using 10,000 tractors, to lift the barricades, but did not go beyond veiled threats.

Mr Simitis, facing his first crisis since winning September's elections, has said sacrifices must be made to meet European Union economic convergence targets.

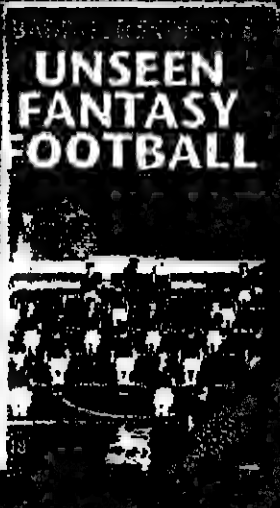
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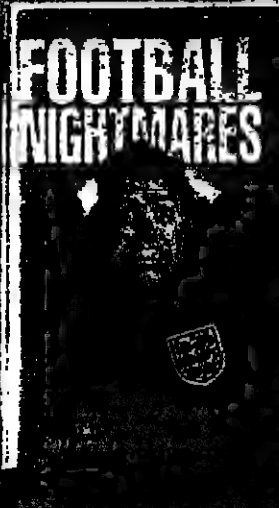
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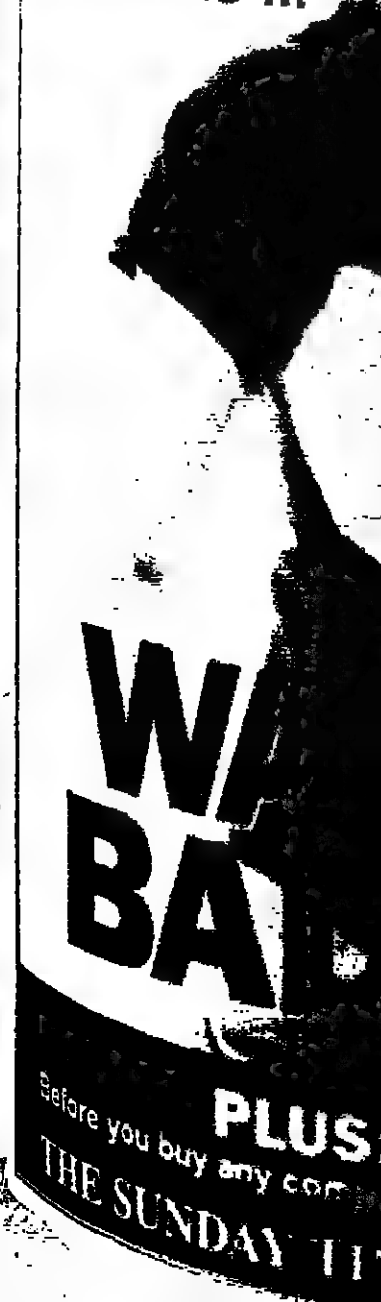
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PLUS: Before you buy any car THE SUNDAY TIMES

Film producer Ismail Merchant's outrageous chutzpah overcomes any adversity



Charm, cunning and cuisine: Ismail woos friends with his curries: "I believe in doing things in the most unorthodox manner. That is the way to make your dreams come true."

'Nothing is impossible'

As I sit in the Groucho Club with Ismail Merchant, Stephen Fry sprouts past and says "Be nice to him won't you" — as if anyone is ever nasty about the world's most popular film producer. Merchant woos actors and financiers by charm, cunning and cuisine; nobody turns him down once they have tasted his *aloo geema*. Simon Callow says the expression "to curry favour" was invented about Ismail. Every film begins and ends with a feast fit for a nawab, prepared by Ismail.

Merchant and Ivory, the longest collaboration in film history, have given us 37 highly individual films in 35 years. The next one, *Surviving Picasso* (with Sir Anthony Hopkins a perfect Picasso, and Natasha McAlhona, first spotted in *Richard II* at Regent's Park Theatre, absolutely stunning as Françoise Gilot) will be released on Boxing Day. Early in the new year we shall see *The Proprietor*, directed by Merchant and starring Jeanne Moreau.

In the meantime Merchant has written a 69-page introduction to the screenplay of *The Proprietor* (Bloomsbury) because he "thought people would enjoy knowing how a film gets made — and how nothing is impossible".

What we learn is that the *foas et origo* of a film is a combination of nebulous factors: Ismail longs to make another film in Paris; wants Jeanne Moreau, whom he has adored ever since *Jules et Jim*; hears an interesting story about the novelist Marguerite Duras, which becomes the germ of the plot; and finds an amazing, antique-filled 17th century apartment in St Germain (in which he now lives).

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



full of chinoiserie, *trompe-l'oeil* and painted cherubs, which would make a great film set.

Somewhat, "focusing the force of my will like a laser beam to make things happen" the film gets made. Eloquent, persuasive, scheming, haggling, wrangling, cajoling, Merchant gets the production together. He tells financiers it is a privilege to invest in his films. If that fails, he threatens them. "I tell them I will come with my Sikh mafiosi," he says, beaming.

This determination and chutzpah is carried through to the outrageous plays he uses to get locations. When they need a scaffold in Central Park in New York, they borrow one from the film set of *Eraser* — just by walking off with it early one morning. When the Triumphant Palace Hotel refuses permission to shoot there, Ismail masquerades as the Maharajah of Jodhpur and marches in with the crew playing his entourage. (He has sent his book to the Maharajah, a friend of his, with a note: "Bajji, please forgive me.") "What is the point," he asks me, "of being some curven-

tional person? I believe in doing things in the most unorthodox manner. That is the way to make your dreams come true."

East is east and west is west, and Ismail Merchant is where the twain meet. His father was a textile trader in the Bombay bazaars; his mother was illiterate and in purdah. In his childhood the family of nine lived in two rooms. But they became prosperous enough to send Ismail to a Jesuit school, St Xavier's. Urdu was his mother tongue. In *Castro* (based on Anita Desai's novel) which he also directed, was a hymn to the language of the Muslim culture of north India.

Brought up on melodramatic Hindi films and American musicals, he was 19 and a student at New York University when he first saw *Nouvelle Vague* and Satyajit Ray films. (Merchant-Ivory have now restored Ray's films, long neglected and almost destroyed by the climate in India.) In New York he added "Merchant" as a surname and, while still a student, shot — in one weekend — his first 14-minute film, which was nominated for an Oscar.

In 1961 he read *The Householder* by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. "I put it in my diary," he says. "This will be my first feature film." He had not yet met Ruth (he pronounces it Root) or James Ivory, "but it was destiny". Saeed Jaffrey introduced Merchant to Ivory, and the two have been together ever since, sharing a house at Claverack in upstate New York. Ivory elegant and finely hewn, like his name; Merchant excitable and hard-selling, like his.

"Ismail believes there are 90 minutes in every hour and 110

cents in every dollar," as Ivory says.

They call him a wizard. When his star was arrested days before the filming of *The Guru*, Ismail got him out of jail. When the cast of *Heat and Dust* were feeling disgruntled and underpaid, Ismail had a palace opened up and prepared a lavish picnic. "As Nehru said, don't tell me about problems, only solutions. If the day dawns black with rain when you need a blue sky, wringing your hands and saying 'it was written' is no good. See adversity as a blessing in disguise. As Forster said, 'Only connect'."

Like many Anglophile outsiders, he finds the British inhibited by modesty and self-deprecation. Invited on to a radio programme to discuss Nicola Beauman's *E. M. Forster biography*, he became enraged when "an uptight academic" questioned the need for another life of Forster. "I said you should be lionising Forster, naming streets after him, he has had nine Oscars! Why not change your character, and be proud? People come to England from outside to take your history, your literature, your actors and technicians, why not enrich and respect the people who have given so much to the rest of the world? Vanessa Redgrave — this country should provide her with money, wealth, gold. You neglect her! How many countries can say that they have a Vanessa Redgrave?"

Working with Jeanne Moreau, Merchant says, was not easy: she writes in a foreword that despite storms and scenes, "Ismail's smile has transformed my life". He tells how he borrowed a brooch for her from Van Cleef & Arpels; stopped the traffic outside the Louvre on a scorching summer afternoon; and took over the Place de la Concorde and shot the Occupation of Paris (for *The Proprietor*) and the Liberation (for *Picasso*) on the same day. "Who else could do that?" he beams.

Ever since Merchant and Ivory got their first award for *Shakespeare Wallah*, in 1966, in Paris, Merchant has longed to have a home base there. Several Paris-based films later (*Quartet*, *Mr and Mrs Bridge*, *Jefferson in Paris*) he was last week made an honorary citizen of Paris, along with Ivory and Jeanne Moreau. Merchant has signed up at the Sorbonne to learn French — a student in his 60th year. "Can you imagine? One should prolong education all your life."

He says he is not rich: it is such a struggle to get the money even after a film is a success. "The exhibitors, who get the cash at the box office, hold on to it for 45-60 days, then they pay the distributors — who may pay you after several months. But what starts on a film set with actors, crew and screenplay, can end in a courtroom with lawyers, auditors and affidavits. One virtually has to become an assassin to get the money."

Ten years ago, in Channel 4's film examining the way the Merchant-Ivory-Prawer

Jhabvala team operates, James Ivory said simply: "If we decide between the three of us that a film is going to get made, it gets made. Our films reflect the strands of all our lives, the places we live and the people we encounter." Hence their cross-cultural products. "Look at our themes," Merchant says. "Why do we do Henry James, Jean Rhys, Forster or V. S. Naipaul? Englishmen in India, Americans in Europe."

The pleasure is working with friends, at full creativity under your own control. Our purpose is not to get rich but to make movies with talent and passion, that people will respond to and talk about for a long time... and that's why, despite the madness, we go on making movies."

Madhur Jaffrey, Merchant Ivory star and rival cook ("I call her the second best," he says), made supper for him in Paris the other day. In his recipe book *Indian Cuisine*, friends write of the flair and inspiration with which he concocts feasts in splendid marquees with lashings of food champagne. I recall seeing Daniel Day-Lewis, Helena Bonham Carter and Co descend on his canapés at the party he threw after *A Room with a View*. Then there are the gifts he hands out: Tiffany pens, silk Nehru shirts shipped from Bombay. After the shooting of *The Proprietor*, at a banquet at the Plaza Hotel in New York, the screenwriter George Trow gave a toast: "To the most wonderful human being in the world." And Ismail, being Ismail, stood up with a broad smile and said: "That's me."

A whiff of the ocean, a call from the wild

Simon Barnes rejoices in the cormorant, the bird anglers despise

A touch of utter wildness to the most prissy and civilised of spots. Most days, I pass an ornamental lake set in the grounds of a stately home: the sort of thing Bertie Wooster would fall into as he escaped from Madeleine Bassett.

A cormorant descends and assumes the pose of a vulture. Stands as sentinel to the waters: cruciform, black wings spread to dry. And brings with him a whiff of open ocean, a sense of the untamed, a call from the wilderness.

This time of year, they gather at dusk on naked trees and gossip and quarrel and feed and roost and assume heraldic poses in that special spreadeagled cormorantine way. They are slightly majestic, slightly comical, slightly sinister. And a whizz at fishing.

Their feathers have a special adaptation: they work the opposite way to most birds. They release the air they keep hold of the water. For a cormorant, water does not flow like water off a duck's back. It is ballast, it is their diver's weight-belt. Cormorants swim low in the water, not terribly buoyant, and that means they can get down deep and fast.

Now cormorants eat fish, and fishermen, cheered on by the *Angling Times*, are shooting them. Illegally: but few people take wildlife laws seriously. Fishing people blame cormorants for killing fish. The cormorants, they say, have got to go.

Blaming fish-eating cormorants for depleting fish stocks seems obvious, and shooting and fishing folk have a taste for the obvious. But their logic is like this: every time you find trouble, you find journalists. So if you kill all the journalists, you won't get any trouble.

Ecology is the science of how the various bits of the world fit together. Complex? It is not that we still don't know how many species there are in the world: we don't even know on what order of magnitude to compute them.

Cormorants and fish are just two components of a vast series of interlocking systems, all of which start with the power of the sun and end up with the top predator.

But even if cormorants affected fish stocks, so what? Cormorants are part of British life. They have come inland in recent years, not because there is a plague of them, but because there is food. The gossip around the roosts has obviously been passed on: plenty of good food inland.

The fact is that cormorants have always been inland as well as marine birds. The Stuart kings used to swim cormorants after fish, in the manner of the Chinese, and they employed a cormorant-keeper.

Subsequently, drainage and pollution destroyed much of our inland waters: but since the war, new waters have been created. Many began as pits for gravel extraction, to feed motorway mania. These have created chains of



The slightly sinister cormorant

lakes, and many of these have been enthusiastically stocked with fish at artificially high levels. Thus cormorants are reclaiming their inheritance.

People involved in the killing sports always carry on as if they were the only people who understood the countryside and its creatures. But the fact of the matter is that they haven't got a clue.

They also talk about how much they love the open spaces. But the true delight of wilderness is the atavistic sense of sharing a planet with our fellow-beasts. The world was not built purely for human convenience, still less for human recreation. Such wilderness as we have left must be shared. And we must share our lakes with our cormorants. And anyway, it is a poor soul that cannot rejoice in a cormorant in the black spreadeagled silhouette of cormorant hanging itself out to dry.

SECTION TWO

Diana Ross renews her love affair with Britain
Arts, 36-39

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Philip Howard



Rage, whether on the road or off, is the deadliest sin of all

Road rage is no joke. The young man who was stabbed 15 times and then had his throat cut, for the enormity of overtaking another car, was the fifth death by road rage this year. What more could his butchers have done if he had committed a graver provocation? I resolve to keep myself to myself and the windows closed whenever I am driven in a car. In Athens, city of tin-plate rage, to raise one's right palm in grateful salute to another motorist is the equivalent of two fingers in English. So when an alien woman driver makes the provocative gesture in Omonia Square in an attempt to signal thanks, the traffic hoots to a halt and turns into the Trojan War.

Now it is possible that our beloved monster the motor car brings out the beast in us. In a similar rage of frustration, rats are said to start eating each other if they are crowded in a laboratory tailback. Perhaps, cocooned in our private cubicles of metal and glass, we think of other road-users as aliens through the screen of a video game, to be zapped. The alternative phrase "road rage" is only two years old. But it is neither a new offence nor a modern condition.

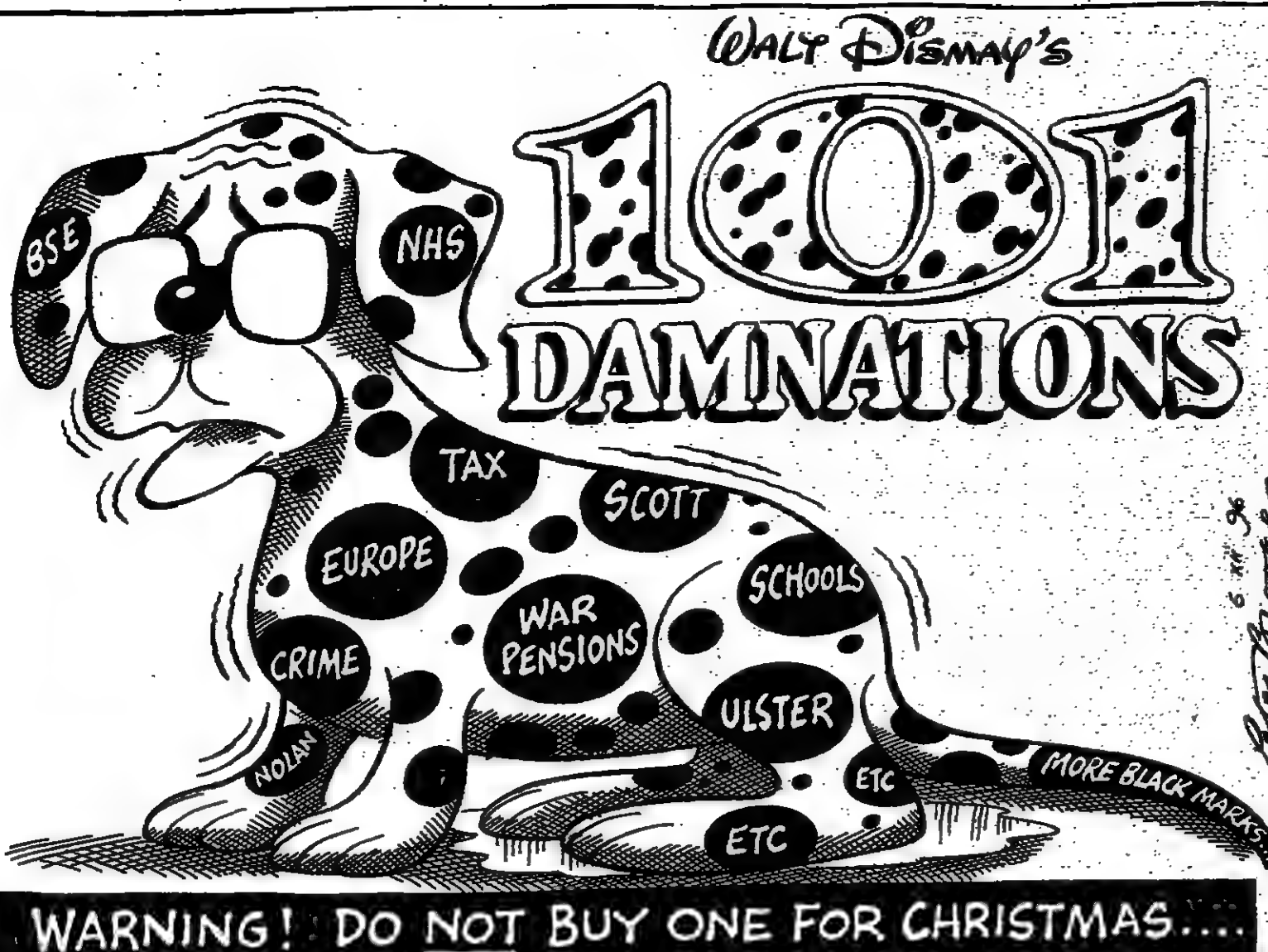
For rage is the deadliest of the seven deadly sins. Sloth can be a virtue, gluttony may be a vice, but the motor of human survival, a good kind of pride is a cement of civil society. But rage is the hot opposite of envy and avarice, and it can be even madder and more destructive than those cold sins. Not for nothing do its etymological roots grow out of madness. Not for nothing does *Prison Patter*, the dictionary of prison slang published today, give almost as many words for "to go into one" (get into a violent rage) as it has for Dr Whos (screws) and woofers (also rhyming slang). For rage is a condition of the criminal and uneducated (not exclusively). Those who cannot control their tempers should never be licensed to control the simpler machinery of a motor car.

On his guided tour of Hell, Dante looked on sinners more in sorrow than in anger. Some of them, such as Paolo and Francesca, and Dante's old tutor, the bugger Bruno Latini, turn into tragic heroes, as Satan became the doomed hero of *Paradise Lost*. But the vilest punishment, continually being dunked in slurry, is reserved for the bad-tempered. And Dante makes his only gloating remark to Virgil: "Master, I should really like to see that man [Filippo Argenti] pushed down into the soup before we get away from the lake." Filippo is, and he bites into his own flesh in rage. Dante must have hated him. For he earns another mention in *Paradise*: "That outrageous family which is a dragon / To anyone who shrinks from it, but like a lamb / To anyone who shows his teeth, or his purse." In the *Decameron*, Boccaccio sums Filippo up as "more foul-tempered than any other citizen of Florence".

Rage is the primeval sin of the Old Testament, epic and tragedy. Without insane rage there would be no *King Lear*, *Winter's Tale* or *Cymbeline*. Rage is the secondary tragic flaw of both Othello and of Hamlet (when he sticks poor old Polonius in the arras). Rage is the theme as well as the first word in the *Iliad*. For it kindled the rage of Achilles. "Now let the Rage his boiling Breast forsook." This strikes an echo from Bottom's very tragic mirth: "... with bloody blarney blade, / He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast."

Because of rage, Hippolytus was torn to pieces by runaway horses. Hercules and Agamemnon went mad with it. "Angry Young Men" was an inexact label for anti-establishment writers. There was much more to them than rage. But John Osborne, Kingsley Amis and (you could say, if you must) Colin Wilson made art out of anger and characters who were angry. So did Evelyn Waugh.

But although anger can make art, there is no excuse for rage in life or on the road. Abraham Lincoln wrote furious letters when angry. He had a good time writing them and it made him feel better. Then he burnt the raging letter and wrote another. Rage is the most inhuman of sins. The fact that it is "road rage" does not diminish its nastiness or the responsibility.



Hitler's martial Jews

Jewish and part-Jewish soldiers fought for the Third Reich. What did they think they were doing? We shall never know

When will the Holocaust be the Holocaust, in all its terrible meaning and no more? When will professors stop finding a new "angle" on something that can never have an angle? When will the dreadful fools and madmen who prove that there was no Holocaust (I have just got another pamphlet saying as much), stop hating and even stop being mad?

Never, I fear, but I have long ago given up trying to convince fools and professors that my nose is of standard British length and width and no more. Wearily, I shrug, and say, yes, I am a Jew, and no, no member of my family died in the Holocaust. And, just to clinch it, no — my name has always been Levin, and never Featherstonhaugh-Golightly.

Now then. What would you say if Adolf Hitler were on his throne and the Holocaust was in full blast, but German Jews were not only serving in Hitler's ranks, but personally enlisting in those ranks. Not just to find a place that the Nazis might not spot, but with full intent to take part in the war on Hitler's side? It sounds lunatic, and in a sense it was. But read this:

It seems that those Jewish Germans who enlisted voluntarily and made efforts to remain in uniform even after their Jewish origins came under scrutiny by the authorities were allowed to do so. Indeed, some rose to high rank and several won the *Ritterkreuz*, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, Germany's highest military decoration, awarded to fighter aces, U-boat captains and tank destroyers. They performed their feats of bravery at the height of the war, when the Nazi state was murdering German Jews in hundreds of thousands and the Jews of Eastern Europe in millions.

Only they can explain why they chose the path they did, and all are now old or already dead.

These almost unbelievable facts were dug up by a young American student, Bryan Rigg, who, in a chance meeting, was to reveal some of the most extraordinary true stories of the Second World War. Rigg did not even know, before he began his studies in this fascinating story, that he was of German-Jewish ancestry, but believed his family was of the Protestant Bible-belt, and among his amusements were the members of his family who had stayed in Germany and died in the Holocaust.

And now, with this extraordinary story at our elbows, we are tempted to believe that the whole thing is, and must be, a hoax. But it isn't. It is not only true, from top to bottom, it is terrible. Terrible, you say? Just glance at one headline (the story broke in *The Daily Telegraph*), reading "Why men of Jewish blood shed it for Adolf Hitler". Answer that.

I can't. Nor can anybody else. I am a Jew, and thus to be hated by Nazis; very well, I understand that, and shrug. But Mr Rigg has not just found a cache of almost unbelievable matter about Hitler's Reich and its evil madness, he has pointed a dagger at some of the newly known facts of the Holocaust, and — well, let me say it again: "Why men of Jewish blood shed it for Adolf Hitler". For they did, they did, they did.

Have you ever heard of Major Robert Borcherdt? No? Nor had I until very recently. He was a half-Jew, and a very brave man, and a very great fighter on Hitler's side. He did not commit atrocities, nor did he allow them in his units. He fought in Russia, in Rommel's Afrika Korps, and he was strewn with medals. Not long before he died, he spoke to the children of his old school, and this is what he said: "Many German Jews and half-Jews who fought in the First World War and even in the Second World War believed that they should honour their Fatherland by serving in the military." And many of them did.

But what I want to know, and I imagine many others want to know, is *what did Jews think they were doing when they were fighting for Hitler?* Take the remarkable story — a perfectly true story — of the way Rabbi Schneerson was saved from the Nazis. The rabbi was the leader of the most ultra-orthodox Jews, and when the war broke he was trapped, and very likely to be killed by Hitler. There was a plea from

the United States to let the Rabbi Schneerson go. It was tough and got but then another German Jew, fighting in the war on the side of Hitler, took a hand: he was a very high officer, Ernst Bloch, who had fought in the First World War, and Schneerson was saved.

And saved in the most macabre manner imaginable. Admiral Canaris recruited Bloch, and then Hitler made the world go round the other way; with a half-Jew staring him in his face, Hitler read the appropriate document: "I, Adolf Hitler, leader of the German nation, approve Major Ernst Bloch to be of German blood. However, after the war, Ernst Bloch will be re-evaluated to see if he is still worthy to have such a title." (Who said Hitler was sane?)

But still the question must be asked and answered, why men of Jewish blood shed it for Adolf Hitler.

Most of those men are now dead, and the dead cannot speak. If they could speak, what might they say? There would be many who would say "I didn't know — how could I know? The whole world was there, and nobody knew — nobody knew what that man called Hitler would do to the world and millions upon millions."

Not enough. Not enough. You, the ones who were there, could see. Oh no, very few indeed could have guessed even that could have been spotted and was by the tiny number who could read *Mein Kampf* from beginning to end, but that was not enough.

Very well, not enough. What next? We must try to think into the minds of the survivors, and what they did and what they told. There is a very old man, 82 and failing, who has asked for anonymity; he shall have it. But he says that he served 6½ years in Hitler's military, and became a captain. Presumably he

drew the curtains when a Nazi went by.

That's small fry. What about a real field marshal, a good friend of Goering and indeed a very important figure in the Nazi camp, for it was he who made the Luftwaffe the tremendous thing it became. That was Field Marshal Milch, and he was a Jew. But a field marshal, surely, should know better. And so should a Jew.

Surely should! Did *Did*. We come back to where we started. But not quite. For we now know the massive quantities of horror that poured out of Bryan Rigg's find. (It was luck, of a kind; he had just come out of a cinema and started to chat to another cinema-goer, a German, whereupon they began to speak, and the other man spoke of his life, whereupon "they talked until dawn". I bet they did.)

We come back to where we started yet again. What were real Jews or even half-Jews (and there were many of these) doing with Adolf Hitler? True, there were people who saw through Hitler very quickly, but were sure that he would be a busted flush in no time. Well, he wasn't, and in the end the blood poured copiously. And there was no shortage of important people: Helmut Schmidt, who became the Chancellor of West Germany for eight years, had when somewhat younger been very much in the wrong place.

This is yet another question that cannot be answered unless the dead rise from the grave to give the answers. It would be dreadful to say that the dead deserved what they got, because they didn't. Again, we hear the terrible words — how could we have known?

Perhaps the most pitiful or most deserved — you can take it either way — is that of Milch, the one who was "a personal friend of Hermann Goering". And instantly the thunder rolls; how does a Jew become a personal friend of Hermann Goering, and more to the point, why is he prepared to be one in the first place?

Milch was tried and convicted in the Nuremberg war trials; his Jewishness did not help him, and he was imprisoned for ten years. But again and again, we ask the question, the question that cannot be answered. What was a Jew, or a half-Jew, doing with Adolf Hitler? God forbid that I should take sides in such a dreadful argument. It is enough that almost all the people concerned are now dead. But if they came to life, would they not instantly go back into the shades?

The soul of society in action

Michael Howard unveils the Philip Lawrence Awards

This Sunday's memorial service will mark the first anniversary of the death of Philip Lawrence, the headteacher murdered at the gates of his London school. His brutal death shocked the nation, but the courage and dignity with which his widow has responded to the tragedy has been an inspiration. In this newspaper on October 21, Frances Lawrence set out her manifesto for the nation. It touched the conscience of many, reminding us of the importance of individual morality, of citizenship, of strong families and strong communities. It was widespread and impassioned support.

I was not surprised by this response. This country has a strong spirit of good citizenship. Self-reliance has always been part of the national character, but so too has the desire to help others. The nation's generosity of spirit is demonstrated frequently. And as well as giving money, ordinary men and women of all ages choose to give their time and effort for the benefit of others. This country has around 23 million regular volunteers. I have met many people who give their time in this way — Neighbourhood Watch organisers, community volunteers, special constables, young people involved in crime prevention work. Their selfless actions go to the heart of good citizenship.

But the ideal of citizenship involves even more than helping others in practical ways. It involves commitment to the nation's moral health. This means setting an example, praising what is good without cynicism, and condemning what is bad without equivocation. Nowhere is this more important than in raising children. There is no greater influence for good than giving the young a sound moral framework for their lives.

In a free society we do not always agree on every moral question. People may disagree over details. And people of conscience with different religious and cultural backgrounds may hold different views on some points. But part of being a nation is sharing basic moral values. Many of these were set out in Mrs Lawrence's manifesto: abhorrence of violence, the importance of the family, the value of respect for the moral and physical guardians of our young. And the imperative of giving children the best possible start in life.

Giving our children the best does not mean just providing material comforts. It means bringing them up within loving and supportive families and helping them to develop fully into moral agents. It also means setting them a challenge. We should encourage, in the words of Mrs Lawrence, their effort, earnestness and excellence. By encouraging a child to take responsibility for himself, we help inculcate a sense of responsibility for others. By developing a child's self-respect, we help him to learn respect for others. As G.K. Chesterton put it: "education is simply the soul of society as it passes from one generation to another."

Regeneration has to start with the individual. The application of the law cannot be a substitute for the individual's sense of moral responsibility. Nor can the words of politicians or religious leaders, however deeply felt, take the place of individual morality.

Government alone cannot meet the challenge set by Frances Lawrence, but the law does give us important. That is why the Government is determined to do what it can to translate her manifesto into practical proposals. In *The Times* on October 22, I announced that we would establish an annual award in Mr Lawrence's memory. This will mark outstanding achievement in citizenship by young people who have helped society through such activities as tackling bullying or taking a stand against drugs.

I plan to launch the award scheme in March. This will highlight examples of good citizenship by young people, illustrating the sort of achievement worthy of an award. We will then seek nominations and make the first awards in December 1997, on the second anniversary of Philip Lawrence's death.

The Government has cross-party support for the Philip Lawrence Memorial Awards, and many organisations, such as the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Citizenship Foundation, the Commission for Racial Equality, Community Service Volunteers, Crime Concern, the Prince's Trust and Youth Clubs UK, have given helpful advice. It is important that the awards complement the various award and grant schemes already in existence.

Today I am asking voluntary and youth groups to help us develop my proposals further. I hope that many will respond with support and ideas.

The awards are designed to highlight the achievements of young people who demonstrate outstanding citizenship, and to encourage others to follow their example. Too often we hear about the crimes and misdemeanours of young people, the bad manners of children, the apathy of youth. But this picture is misleading. Most young people are law-abiding. Most have a strong moral sense. And very many are actively involved in voluntary work, trying to improve the lives of those around them.

The Philip Lawrence Memorial Awards will commemorate the life of an inspirational man. They will commend young people who exemplify the civic virtues that Philip Lawrence encouraged and inculcated during his life's work. I hope the scheme will play a part in helping to raise the next generation of good citizens.

The author is Home Secretary.

Clive live

A CHARMING MAN, Clive Anderson, the TV presenter and barrister — so the schoolmarish Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley thought when she sat next to him at a recent gala dinner hosted by the BBC.

Mrs B joined such swoony BBC types as Peter Sissons and John Birt at the event: Anderson seemed a convivial dining companion. But Virginia did not leave early for a vote in the House of Commons. At which point Anderson let rip.

His wife, Jane, had worked as a consultant at Bart's Hospital in London, an institution which Bottomley decided to close when she was Health Secretary. Anderson started cracking jokes: "If you want treatment, you should wrap yourself in a fur coat and ask for Rolf Harris," he laughed, referring to the Australian's television show about animal doctors.

He was in full flow — "If you want to get an X-ray, it's quicker to go down to Heathrow than to hospital" — when back into the room and into earshot walked Mrs B — a disappointed woman.

● England's thrashing at the hands of the Mashonaland chicken farmers' XI may have shaken

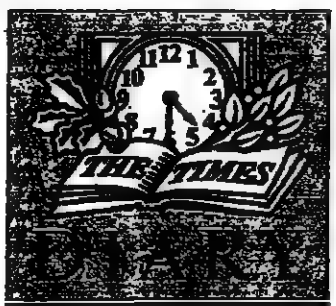
the MCC, but not the Zimbabwean High Commission. A call to congratulate them on their seven-wicket victory was met by a long pause, then: "Victory? Party? No sir, there is no party here. Everyone has gone home."

Still vicious

NO CHANCE of détente between the writer Amanda Craig and her



● "Illegal pensioners coming ashore on Torquay beach"



old boyfriend, the critic David Sexton, who considered himself aligned in Craig's sulphuric portrait of literary London, *A Vicious Circle*.

At the delayed launch of the book on Wednesday evening, she said crime-writer friends had offered to supply the names of out-of-work SAS men should the need arise: "You know, if things get really tricky..." she says, making a slicing motion across her neck.

● Votes are in for the annual government special adviser beauty contest, and the winner is... Andrew Honnor. Virginia Bottomley's man. Tall, dark and completely au fait with the National Lottery, Honnor won particular support over at the Department of Transport. No one can recall such simmering sexuality among the special advisers since the days of David "Treat Me" Ruffley, now

the Tory candidate for Bury St Edmunds, and formerly special adviser to Kenneth Clarke. "Fantastic," Ruffley is said to have roared when he moved with his boss from Health to the Home Office. "Home will be great for my pulling power."

Left hook

JOY JOHNSON has struck back at Labour. The party's former director of communications, who resigned acrimoniously last year, writes scathingly in this week's *New Statesman* of the mess Labour found itself in this summer over its Scottish referendum plans.



Honor fancied man

The sort of Eton-cropped blonde capable of ladder-like fights with her stare, Miss Johnson says, "It is a tale of dramatic changes in tactics, a tale of the party leadership's lack of openness with its foot-soldiers."

Then, with another swipe at the party high-ups with whom she found it impossible to work, she adds: "The strain of authoritarianism of which the leadership is accused runs through all levels of the party."

● After ousting Sir Nicholas Scott, Tories in Kensington and Chelsea are faced with the spectre of Winston Churchill, MP for Dagenham. No more convenient a moment for Churchill to sound off about war pensions and their cutbacks could have arisen. His seat disappears in the boundary changes and he has been rejected by virtually everybody. K.B.C. stuffed full of colonels and war widows, may be his last chance.

No match

FORGET Knightsbridge and Notting Hill. Britain's fashion centre these days is Gloucestershire, home turf of the Blows. Where it used to feature a two-year-old girl in pearls, *Country Life* this week has a picture of Selma Blow, designer, gazing out over her family acres,



Selma: that hat

dressed in one of her trademark velvet jackets, a tall Mister Man style purple hat and ummarching shoes.

Miss Blow, the grand-daughter of the architect Denmar Blow is the sister-in-law of Isy Blow, stylist extraordinaire and known to Princess Margaret as "Hiaaar" on account of her eclectic headwear. As to the comendrum of Miss Blow's odd shoes, it turns out, sadly, that they are not a Christmas fashion statement. When the photographer arrived, she simply couldn't find a matching pair.

P.H.S.



A LABOUR EUROPE

Blair still evades Major's grasp — and Brussels is helping

Next week's Dublin summit will demonstrate to the public what negotiators already know. The inter-governmental conference (IGC) to review the Maastricht treaty is proceeding, deliberately, at a snail's pace. The United Kingdom's partners in the European Union are determined to avoid any showdown with Britain before the general election.

The greatest fear in Brussels is that over the coming months the Labour Party will rush to join John Major in any foxhole which the Prime Minister decides to occupy, thus limiting its post-electoral freedom of manoeuvre. On the assumption of a Labour victory, officials are therefore trying to keep the foxholes undug, allowing Tony Blair to enter the final peace talks having made as few electoral commitments as possible and with maximum flexibility as a consequence.

The Dutch, who take over from Ireland next month and were originally expected to conclude the IGC negotiations, are hinting that because it would not be fair to expect Mr Blair to reach a final IGC deal within weeks of taking over, the entire timetable for a revised treaty might be set back by months for Britain's benefit. The IGC text circulated to governments yesterday by the Irish presidency is consistent with this waiting game. It does not pretend to be a draft treaty; it is notable for what it leaves out; and it is even more notable for the phrase that runs through it like a religious mantra — "to be dealt with at a later stage".

Noel Dorr, Ireland's IGC chairman, blandly claims that too little progress has been made even to attempt a synthesis of views on such contentious areas as the extension of qualified majority voting and the right of each country to have a EU Commissioner. The main exception, the proposal to centralise control over visa, asylum and immigration policies, will encounter solid British resistance. But it will not open up a Conservative-Labour rift, because this is one of the few areas on which Labour has not only spelt out its position but

agrees with the Government that these are issues for sovereign states.

Despite Tory tauntings, Labour may even be able to avoid committing itself on the draft chapter that would commit EU governments to coordinate their employment policies. The Irish text is careful to refer to broad objectives, instead of setting explicit targets for getting people back to work.

From beginning to end runs the theme that deeper integration is a precondition for EU enlargement; Britain is identified in paragraph after paragraph as the grit in the federalist wheel. Mr Major needs to force Labour into the open on what its position will be on these items that are asterisked provisional, marked to be discussed, or merely summarised disagreements. Mr Blair will try to continue with his stock response that the questions are, for now, hypothetical.

Labour's only formal position paper on the IGC, published some 14 months ago, does contain prisoners for the Prime Minister to take. It still stands, for example, by the revealing phrase: "we reject permanent opt-outs". Where then does it stand on Britain's opt-out on economic and monetary union? Is it destined, under Labour, as those words suggest, to be strictly temporary?

But Labour also presents a frustrating target for Mr Major. The Shadow Cabinet is in a state of deep denial over Europe. It cannot face bothering with any EU business that it does not expect to be a "wedge issue" in next year's election campaign. It was only because the referendum on a single currency was judged to be such an issue that Labour belatedly matched the Tory pledge.

The IGC, about which there will be much fuss in the coming week, is not, of course, where the stakes are highest. The countries intending to join EMU in 1999 are making Europe's most important constitutional moves. As our Economics Editor argues on page 29, the proposed EMU stability pact could be as politically destructive as were the war reparations exacted from Germany under the Treaty of Versailles.

CLINTON'S CHOICES

The President has taken risks with his foreign policy team

After a painful period of public indecision, President Clinton has decided upon the officials who will guide US foreign policy during his second term. His choice of Senator William Cohen, a Republican, as Defence Secretary will be applauded. The selection of Samuel Berger, currently Deputy National Security Adviser, to fill the top position there represents continuity. The Central Intelligence Agency will not regard the arrival of Anthony Lake as Director with much enthusiasm but the CIA, largely deprived of a function since the Cold War's demise, is in distinct decline. Most attention will fall on the elevation of Madeleine Albright, currently US Permanent Representative to the United Nations, to the post of Secretary of State.

Ms Albright has been a controversial figure at the UN. Her highly abrasive manner has caused difficulties with America's allies as well as her foes. The appointment will be regarded as the triumph of one of the most improbable partnerships in American political history: that between Hillary Clinton, the liberal-inclined First Lady, and Senator Jesse Helms, the ultra-conservative Republican Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mrs Clinton supported Ms Albright largely because of her gender. The North Carolina Senator is an admirer of her undiplomatic style.

The new Secretary of State will bring great energy to her portfolio. Inevitably though she will be seen as a political creature of the President rather than an independent figure in her own right. Had Mr Clinton picked either former Senator George Mitchell or outgoing Senator Sam Nunn that would not

have been the case. Both men had been respected leaders in Congress, commanding bi-partisan respect in Washington and thus instant attention abroad. Ms Albright will be regarded with much more suspicion. Furthermore, her selection looks curious considering the emphasis that the President placed on economics during his recent Asian tour. Even her most ardent admirers would not count international trade as one of her strong points.

Ms Albright is not a uniquely unusual choice. Dean Rusk and William Rogers, who served under Presidents Kennedy and Nixon, were almost unknown to Congress and most citizens of the United States before assuming their portfolios. John Foster Dulles, under Dwight Eisenhower, and Alexander Haig, for Ronald Reagan, were bombastic characters for friend and foe alike. Nonetheless, Ms Albright will have to deal with the perception that she has won the most senior post in American international relations for reasons more related to Washington politics than the wider world. She must overcome that assumption to be effective on the global stage.

Either by accident or design the President's decisions may contain the broader message that he intends to be rather more actively engaged in foreign policy in his second term. That has often been true of re-elected Presidents, especially those whose domestic style is cramped by a hostile Congress. In that case, Mr Clinton could have decided that loyalty to him personally was the supreme requirement of his surrogates. But for the world, the price is continued uncertainty about what the next four years will bring.

MUSEUM OF FIRE

Why the scholars need at least a few accountants

To all friends of the British Museum — among whom *The Times* certainly counts itself — Andrew Edwards's management report, detailed on page six today, must be deeply disturbing. Just as people are often most deeply hurt by those they know best, institutions too are most vulnerable to those who understand which slight or sally will wound them. If the British Museum had hired a management consultant to advise on how to deal with its financial deficit, their inquiry might have reached similar conclusions. But the language might have been more brutal and more easily dismissed as unworthy.

Mr Edwards is a retired senior Treasury official: he sees all too well how the public service works. Although his feelings are restrained and his voice is nowhere raised, he was all too plainly appalled by what he found. His accumulation of implied disapproval leaves an unambiguous impression of how one of the world's most prized cultural collections has been mismanaged. When Mr Edwards remarks almost in passing that "the Museum does not at present employ any qualified accountants", the implications of this observation take a few extra moments to sink in. When Mr Edwards says that the Museum's information technology for financial control is "a huge impediment to progress", he leaves the reader to guess whether he found officials

using abacuses, Victorian cash registers or simply a hotch-potch of modernity.

The desperate urgency that pervades the Edwards report is more important than its detailed conclusions. Condensed and translated out of polite Whitehall language, Mr Edwards might be summarised thus: "Pay attention in Bloomsbury! Time and money are short. Your aims are muddled. Your management structure and culture looks outdated even by the standards of the Pharaohs. Your scholar-curators are proliferating and out of control. Most of the world's great museums — and you are the greatest of all — charge an entrance fee and you will do the same unless you can come up with a better money-raising idea. But I have not found many people with that sort of fire and firmness in this building so far."

The Museum slipped Mr Edwards's report into the public domain last month, hoping that "constructive discussion" would ensue, but also disagreeing over the need to impose entrance charges. The only public discussion to date has been a predictable slanging match over the charges issue. If the Museum's staff feel that Mr Edwards is unfair, let them say so. They would demonstrate that Great Russell Street was in boisterous health. If they cannot do so, change must quickly come. When the Museum's trustees meet this weekend, they must ensure that this message is grasped.

When the police exceed their brief

From Mr Stanley Best

Sir, You quote today a chief detective inspector as stating that he will "investigate what legal steps could be taken" to increase the two-year sentence on the two girls convicted of the manslaughter of Louise Allen.

The officer should be reminded that the police have no responsibility for appealing sentences. It is for the Attorney-General, not the police, to consider whether a sentence is unduly lenient.

Police officers of all ranks must resist the temptation to conduct "investigations" of this kind or to express themselves as "extremely disappointed" (or otherwise) at verdict or sentence. Their duty is to prevent crime, to detect what they cannot prevent, and to bring those charged to court — subject to the power of the Crown Prosecution Service which may elect not to proceed.

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY BEST,
As from: Bracton Chambers,
95a Chancery Lane, WC2
December 3.

From Mr Michael B. Ward
Sir, I was surprised at the Police Complaints Authority's decision not to proceed with disciplinary action against the two police officers who arrested a Nigerian asylum seeker, Mr Oluwashijomi Lapite (News in brief, December 3).

Mr Lapite died after having been placed in a neck-lock during a struggle and one of the police officers admitted at the inquest that he had kicked Lapite in the head, albeit in self-defence.

In the same edition of the paper you report "Police protest as girls get two years for fatal kicking". In this instance two girls, aged 12 and 13 at the time of the attack, pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of a third young girl after deliberately kicking her about the head.

Whilst I would not condone the actions of the girls, I would suggest that, at such an age, they may not have been fully aware of the fatal consequences that could result from their violent actions. The same could hardly be said of police officers — even though, as in the Lapite incident, they were the attacked rather than the attackers.

Yours, with deep concern,
M. WARD,
113 Goodhart Way,
West Wickham, Kent.
December 3.

Divided Ireland

From Mr David W. Bleakley

Sir, You are right to remind Tony Blair that a Labour government "would be preoccupied by Ulster too" (leading article, December 2).

Mr Blair's fellow socialists in Northern Ireland wish him well and are anxious to help; but we can best do so only when we are given the right to join the British Labour Party.

Mr Blair could do himself and the people of Northern Ireland a great deal of good by persuading his party to reverse its ban on membership by citizens from the region. Such action would also remove a piece of discrimination which should have no place within a truly modern Labour Party.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BLEAKLEY
(Minister of Community Relations,
Stormont, 1972,
8 Thornhill, Bangor, Co Down,
December 3.

From Mr M. G. Harman

Sir, Your leader of November 29, "Major's commitment", says that the IRA ceasefire must stop "all military operations" — including training, re-stocking of terrorist arsenals, punishment beatings, and preparatory surveillance.

When did punishment beatings become accepted as military operations?

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL HARMAN,
Holmwood, 37 Upper Park Road,
Camberley, Surrey.
December 1.

A choral composer

From Dr Edward Higginbottom

Sir, Your obituary of Bernard Rose (November 30) is an engaging picture of a remarkable figure in British musical life. It is perhaps a little light on his accomplishment as a composer. In the choral field few have shown his degree of sensitivity to the medium: his setting of the evening responses will endure alongside those of Byrd, and few have written works of such exquisite poise as his *Feast Song for St Cecilia*.

We sang this in New College Chapel on St Cecilia's Day, only hours after Rose's death. It served beyond any words to remind us what his craft and inspiration have bequeathed to British choral music.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM
(The Organist and Tutor in Music),
New College, Oxford.
December 3.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Tory policy on museum funding

From the Minister of State,
Department of National Heritage

Sir, The perception that the British Museum's financial difficulties are entirely due to a decline in government funding and to the moving of the British Library to St Pancras (letters, November 21, 25, 28, December 2) is not supported by an independent report commissioned by the Trustees of the British Museum itself, and made publicly available by them last month.

That report identifies a number of causes over many years, and recommends essential improvements to the organisational structure, management and efficiency of the museum, to strengthen its financial position ("Are we pressing the wrong buttons?", Arts, November 30).

It is misleading to suggest, as Isabel Carlisle does ("The case for free museums", November 29), that "the pattern of allocation of funds to national museums and galleries" reveals that "the Government intends to end the principle of free admission". This is simply not the case.

Since the last general election, out of the total sum granted to national museums and galleries, the share given by the Government to the non-changing museums has in fact increased. The allocations announced in last week's Budget will see their share

grow further over the coming three years.

In deciding allocations this year, we have protected the funding of those who have benefited less from recent settlements and have made greater strides in improving their efficiency. We have also directed support towards areas of greater need. It is for this reason that, against all predictions, the Government has agreed to compensate the British Museum in full for the future loss of receipts from the British Library.

Any decision on admission charges will be made by the Trustees of the museum, and not by the Government. The Trustees are appointed to manage the British Museum independent of government, and they are therefore best placed to consider admission arrangements in the light of the museum's unique financial circumstances.

Last July Government published *Treasures in Trust*, its first review of museums policy in 60 years. Nobody who had read this review, and the radical reforms it proposes, can be in any doubt about the Government's strong commitment to the essential role of museums in our society.

Yours faithfully,
IAIN SPROAT,
Department of National Heritage,
2-4 Cockspur Street, SW1,
December 3.

Selection of UN Secretary-General

From Lord Judd, Senior Fellow
of Safeworld

Sir, Amidst all our neurosis about Europe it is easy to forget that Britain is still a major player in the world stakes. As one of only five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Britain has a special responsibility to help lead the debate on the selection of the next UN Secretary-General (leading article, "All at sea", December 3).

You are right to call the present selection process a farce. Initially all we had was the US brandishing its veto. Now a fundamental quality apparently needed for what is the most demanding chief executive's job in the world is to be an African. This is nonsense, every bit as much as it would be if an essential requirement was to be Anglo-Saxon.

We must not let political posturing blind us. The present dilemma provides a vital opportunity to evaluate the challenges facing the UN and, therefore, the qualities needed in its leader to help the organisation meet them. Yet this is being missed.

The crisis in central Africa has

again demonstrated that the problems of the world today require a global response. The new leader must be able to articulate this and convince member states that isolationism is not in their own interest.

Governments need to be shown that the UN is an organisation worth supporting. This will require a Secretary-General who is a skilful administrator capable of cutting through bureaucracy and assuring member states that their resources will not be lost to self-indulgent officialdom. Fundamentally the Secretary-General must be an inspiring figure capable of eliciting the financial support and the quality of personnel which the UN so badly needs.

Britain's prestigious place on the Security Council demands a lead on these vital issues. If we don't help to provide it, the argument may well grow for us to move over and make way for someone else.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK JUDD,
Senior Fellow, Safeworld,
3rd Floor, 33-34 Alfred Place, WC1,
December 4.

Planning for disaster

From Sir John Blelloch

Sir, In a year that has seen major disasters such as those in Dunblane and Manchester as well as the Channel Tunnel fire and oil pollution from the Sea Empress on the Welsh coast, the money local authorities receive towards making adequate response arrangements has again been cut by the Home Office following the Budget. This should be a major cause of concern to the public.

The work of local authority emergency planners is the public's insurance policy for coping when things go wrong. Across the country well rehearsed arrangements, made in close co-operation with all who have a part to play, seek to ensure that an effective response is available at all

times. As recently as 1991-92 the government grant for this work nationwide amounted to £25.1 million. This grant has been eroded year on year, resulting in a figure for 1997-98 of under £15 million. This is less than the Government spends on its entertainment budget.

Cuts of such magnitude inevitably compromise emergency planning activity and jeopardise the effectiveness of the response to future major emergencies. This should be of grave concern to the public, because it is they who stand to suffer the next time disaster strikes.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BLELLOCH
(President, Emergency
Planning Society),
PO Box 9697, London, NW6 4HS,
December 2.

Saving St Pancras

From the Director of
The Victorian Society

Sir, Lord Amptill (letter, December 3; see also letter, November 29) rightly draws attention to the time given by Parliament to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill. However, the "contractually binding undertakings and agreements" with London & Continental Railways (LCR) to which he refers bind them to practically nothing, as far as works to the Grade I St Pancras Station are concerned. The Heritage Agreement, which replaces normal listed building procedures in the Rail Link Bill, is freedom dressed up as control. LCR must consult with English Heritage but in most circumstances can disregard their advice.

No one doubts LCR's good intentions and the potential benefits to St Pancras. But proper safeguards are still essential for a Grade I listed building. If the project were to run into financial difficulties, as Eurotunnel did, the temptation to cut corners and skimp on conservation could be irresistible. By then, however, it would be too late. The Government, having all too readily surrendered its right of final determination, lacks the call-in powers to protect one of the world's finest railway stations.

The rail link is supposed to be a flagship project for the Private Finance Initiative. What this means for conservation is now all too clear. For the Government to deny itself a final say on major works to so important a building is deeply irresponsible. It is an abnegation of the duties of environmental stewardship advocated in its own recent Green Paper, *Protecting our Heritage*.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM FILMER-SANKEY,
Director,
The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, W4,
December 4.

'Unchristian bickering'

From Mrs Masha Woollard

Sir, Whether or not the painting of Jesus in Bethlehem was shedding real tears (report, November 29), I am sure that Christ himself is indeed weeping over the unchristian bickering between the representatives of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches in Israel.

This unholy rivalry shames them, and distresses other Christians in a world where at last we are seeing the beginnings of unity as opposed to denominationalism.

Yours faithfully,
MASHA WOOLLARD,
15 Haywards Road,
Brighton, East Sussex.
November 29.

School uniforms

From Mr Bryn Giles

Sir, Does the practice of some schools requiring uniforms to be bought from a particular shop, highlighted in your report of November 30, warrant examination by the Office of Fair Trading?

It would seem to me to contain the seeds of some rather squalid little monopolistic situations.

Yours faithfully,
BRYN GILES,
12 Carmarthen Road,
Henleaze, Bristol,
December 1.

Synod debate on Anglican agenda

From Mr Alan Forward

Sir, Your leading article of November 26, "The Anglican agenda", questions the General Synod's preoccupation with reorganisation at a time when there is enormous public interest in the moral climate of modern Britain.

Contrary to your conclusion, the Church of England must address its internal administration before it can provide moral leadership for the nation. It is the present lack of focus and responsibility which last year enabled one of its many committees to issue the confused report, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society*.

That muddle of morality, disowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury (report, June 5, 1995), would not have been published if the proposed Archbishop's Council had been established earlier.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN FORWARD,
The Lindens, Poynton, Dorset.
November 26.

From Professor Grevel Lindop

Sir, Now that the Church of England is revising its service of baptism to give a deeper spiritual sense and more poetic feeling (report, November 30), prospective godfathers may like to reflect on a modern poet's definition of their role.

Invited to stand godfather to a friend's child in 1945, Robert Graves noted: "I find that infant baptism is a heathen rite practised by the ancient Welsh and Irish: adult baptism only was practised by the early Christians." But he accepted willingly, commenting:

I think the godfather's job in this modern world is always to be the chap to whom the godchild writes if he or she has got into a real jam and needs to be bailed out, or fished out, of a stew; and with whom he/she goes to stay, uninvited, at times of emotional crisis (*In Broken Images: Selected Letters of Robert Graves, 1914-1946*, Hutchinson, 1982).

Not very poetic, nor very orthodox, perhaps, but sound common (and even spiritual) sense.

Yours faithfully,
GREVEL LINDOP,
The University of Manchester,
Department of English
Language and Literature,
Manchester, M13 9PL,
December 1.

From the Provost of Blackburn

Sir, So yet another link between the parish church and the rank-and-file of its parishioners is under scrutiny (letters, November 26, 29). Is anybody asking what our engaged couples think of the possibility of dropping the calling of banns?

It may be that the wording needs to be revised, but surely the need to give welcome and affirmation to those planning a church wedding still remains. In an anonymous world, shy, even non-churchgoing couples coming by invitation to "hear their banns" are, in my experience, given a "lift" in those few moments of the service that are specially for them.

I believe that there are still great pastoral opportunities handed to us on a plate in this area of ministry, even through what may seem old-fashioned preliminaries. As a Church, we should be making more of these opportunities and not less.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID FRAYNE,
The Provost's House,
Preston New Road,
Blackburn, Lancashire,
December 3.

From the Reverend Terence Lee

Sir, As the dear old C of E machinates about changing laws and traditions only extant for a few hundred years and therefore fair game, I was reminded of a comment made by a fellow traditionalist about the mayhem caused by the debate about the ordination of women — "all they want to do is prance around in robes dressed up like men".

Yours, in Domino,
TERENCE LEE,
45 Christchurch Road,
Reading, Berkshire,
December 4.

Seat of power

From Mr Stanley Martin

Sir, Commenting on the possibility of Sir Nicholas Scott's Commons seat being passed on to Chris Patten, you say (leading article, December 2) that Hong Kong's tradition of appointed members in its legislature is unlikely to be easily imported. Surely, it does not need to be. We have the House of Lords.

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY MARTIN,
14 Great Spilmans,
Dulwich, SE22,
December 3.

Who's to blame?

From Mr P. J. Underwood

Sir, Should not every child sue their parents for bringing them into this uncertain world and thus exposing them to its hazards?

Yours faithfully,
P. J. UNDERWOOD,
18 Edinburgh Wood,
Ickenham, Uxbridge, Middlesex,
December 3.

JOHN VASSALL

William John Vassall (he hated his first name and preferred to use his second) was born in St Bartholomew's

Shown the photographs at a meeting with two KGB officers, he was asked initially to supply information of a fairly general kind. Gradually the demands became more specific, and at Christmas 1955 he received his first payment, of 2,000 roubles (then about £50).

Vassall later insisted that at this time he did not regard his actions as espionage. Though worried about what he was getting into, he claimed that he was unable to identify the Ambassador, Sir William Hayter, whom he regarded as cold, aloof and forbidding. Hayter was to say that, had he been consulted, he would have arranged for Vassall sent home, as had been done in "one or two other cases". The



Vassall seems genuinely to have thought that his troubles would end with his return to London. They did not, and, back in the Admiralty where Lord Carrington was First Lord, he found himself being run, from a flat in Pelham Court, South Kensington, by the now notorious Russian spy-master Nikolai Borisovich Rodin, a counsellor at the Soviet Embassy who had also controlled George Blake and the members of the Portland spy ring.

Eventually the obvious gap between his modest income and his lavish expenditure did bring him to official attention, and a raid on his flat revealed, hidden in a secret compartment in a wardrobe, ten films with 140 pictures of some 17

The security questions raised by his conviction were far-reaching, and George Brown, deputy leader of the Opposition, used them to goad and harry Macmillan's Government. A tribunal under Lord Radcliffe was finally set up to investigate them. Macmillan hoped that its findings would help to dispel the atmosphere of bitterness and suspicion created by the case. "I feel," he said, "that the time has come for men of propriety and decency not to tolerate the growth of what I can only call the spirit of Titus Oates or Senator McCarthy."

His death from a heart attack went unreported for a fortnight. His body was cremated after a private funeral on Tuesday at the Brompton Oratory.

When the king's cousin and former prime minister, Prince Daoud Khan, who had once appointed Karmal's father to the governorships of Herat and Paktia, overthrew the monarchy in July 1973, Karmal's followers in the armed forces readily joined hands with him and Parchamites were given Cabinet posts. But Daoud refused to share meaningful power with his partners and did not carry out many of the reforms he had promised. Within two years he had closed all the



Karmal and Dr Radezad never married and had no children.

Born in Vienna, of Jewish parentage, Kassner nurtured aspirations towards writing operas at an early age. But any plans in this direction he may have had were cut short by Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938. At 17 he

By 1944 he had married an Englishwoman and started his company, the Edward Kassner Music Co. One night in France during heavy bombardment by the Germans, Kassner wrote what



In the early 1950s, Eddie Kassner amassed a string of hit songs with recordings by Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Nat King Cole, Vera Lynn.

Kassner's great coup, however, was a song that changed the face of popular music, *Rock Around The Clock*. He paid \$250 for something that many of his contemporaries

Then in 1964, with the British Invasion in full swing, a band called The Kinks was signed up in a management and publishing deal. A string of worldwide hits ensued starting with *You Really Got Me*, followed by *All Day and All of the Night*, *Tired of Waiting for You* and *Well Respected Man*. After another 20 years, England had again become the focal point of Eddie Kassner's business. In 1966, he set up President Records. Within a year, the label had achieved its first chart success with records by The Symbols and Felice Taylor, the latter a Top 20 entry with *My Little Red Book*. Then *I Feel Love Comin' On*. His next discovery was Britain's first successful racially-mixed group, The Equals, who stormed to the top of every

The 1980s saw production deals with rock legends Denny Laine, Eddie Hardin, Ray Fenwick and, most significantly, keyboard wizard Rick Wakeman, whose 12-year association with the Kassner group, first as artist and then as writer, produced nearly 30 albums and over a hundred copyrights. President, now in its 13th year of business, has become one of the longest-established independent record companies owning many hundreds of master recordings. The publishing companies contain some 14,000 copyrights.

Edward Kassner is survived by his wife Eileen and three sons and two daughters.

[illegible]

...are nearly law, and

are now on their way to this port under his charge. Mr. Foster, the steersman of the steam-boat United States, was killed by a grape shot from the British steam-boat *Experiment*, yesterday. The *Experiment* then attempted to round up the schooner *Charlotte*, but was fired into by the Patriots on board of her, killing six and wounding five, after which the *Experiment* retreated to Prescott.

"A small boat containing four or five Patriots, crossing from Ogdensburg to Prescott, was fired into by the British steam-boat *Coburg* and disabled and then she ran alongside and fired down upon them, sinking the boat and killing every person on board."

that they are completely hemmed in."

هكذا من الأصل

NEWS

Major denies rift with Clarke

John Major and Kenneth Clarke were struggling to counter suggestions of a serious rift after the BBC reported that the Chancellor was prepared to lead a mass walkout if the Prime Minister gave into the Right over Europe.

Both denied that Mr Clarke had threatened to resign if Mr Major abandoned his "wait-and-see" on a single currency — the Chancellor in a statement in mid-afternoon and the Prime Minister in the Commons 20 minutes later. Pages 1, 12

Duchess of Kent suffering from ME

The Duchess of Kent has chronic fatigue syndrome, the illness also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) and has cancelled all of her official engagements. The news was released on the day she was to have attended the awards ceremony of Childline, a children's charity. Page 1

'Superbug' identified

Two patients at a London hospital have become the first to be infected with a mutant "superbug" that evades detection by thriving on the antibiotics used to kill it. Page 1

Albright's top post

President Clinton chose Madeleine Albright, US Ambassador to the UN, to be the first female Secretary of State. Page 17

European vision

Europe was offered its first outline of a more integrated union including plans for the abolition of all frontiers but the blueprint for a new treaty skirts the national veto. Page 2

Grey frontier ban

David Nicholson, 52, Tory MP for Taunton, who advocated a ban on pensioners retiring to the West Country to ease the rural housing crisis, was accused of double standards. Page 3

Vatican dispute

The Pope told the Archbishop of Canterbury in a blunt discussion on women priests that only he had authority "as the successor to St Peter" to lay down doctrine. Page 5

A-level intervention

Gillian Shepherd intervened to safeguard A-level standards after a report showed that the examination's depth and rigour were under threat. Page 7

£9-a-day cricketers humiliate England

England's cricketers experienced one of their most humiliating defeats when they were beaten — with a day to spare — by Mashonaland in Harare. Zimbabwe is the weakest Test nation in the world and its part-timers are paid £9 a day. England had hoped for easy matches on their tour but have now lost two of their first three. Page 48

New drug success

A new drug treatment for osteoporosis, the disease which weakens bones, halves the risk of fractures, doctors said. Page 9

Rail vandalism fear

Railway vandalism is soaring and could lead to "mass murder" if urgent steps were not taken, the Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways said. Page 10

Passport assurance

Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, said that it would be "impudent" of Peking to threaten almost 140,000 people in Hong Kong who were given British passports in 1990 to provide reassurance after the 1989 Tiananmen Square killings. Page 13

Heirloom sale

The Pretender to the French throne will sell off hundreds of family heirlooms after his children accused him of plundering their inheritance. Page 14

Juppé misery

France's drive for a single currency is under threat and M Juppé's popularity has reached the lowest ebb of any leader in modern French history. Page 15

Goering's £13 million

Swiss bankers used diplomatic pouches to smuggle Nazi gold and securities into Argentina, including a £13 million retirement fund for Hermann Goering, the Luftwaffe commander. Page 16



Ballyward and stable companion Flow are washed down in the cold air of Windsor after the Woodside Novices Chase won by Flow

British Gas is to split itself into a gas sales company to be called Centrica and a gas production, exploration and gas transport business to be called BG.

Page 25

Football: Martin Edwards, the chairman of Manchester United, has hinted that the club may now make a significant move into the transfer market. Page 44

Tennis: Tim Henman faces a semi-final meeting with Boris Becker in the Compaq Grand Slam Cup in Munich after a superb victory over MaliVai Washington. Page 45

Rugby union: Andy Read, the Wasps lock forward, seems certain to make his first international appearance for two years after being recalled to the Scotland squad against Italy. Page 41

Cricket: England A continued their excellent form on the tour of Australia with a two-wicket victory over New South Wales in a one-day game. Page 46

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 5.4 to 4050.6. Sterling fell from 92.7 to 91.8 after a fall from \$1.6382 to \$1.6270 and from DM2.5602 to DM2.5295. Page 28

Mind's art: Despite the Nazis' efforts to discredit it, a groundbreaking collection of more than 6,000 paintings by psychiatric patients has survived to go on show at the Hayward Gallery.

Page 36

Joking apart: Comedy leaves *The Eleventh Commandment*, a first play by comedian David Schneider about Jewish traditions and the generation gap. Page 37

Best albums: David Sinclair reviews the best of the pop releases and recommends Tiger, a new British group that doesn't remind you of an old group. Page 38

Reigning Supreme: Alan Jackson meets Diana Ross and finds her friendliness at odds with her reputation as an imperious and temperamental star. Page 39

Caught off-guard: A choice in schooling is being eroded as the obsession with exam results pushes the independent schools to be alike. Page 35

Black picture: Hundreds of disabled children cannot attend local schools. Now a drive to make state schools accessible can win the backing it needs. Page 35

IN THE TIMES

MAGAZINE

James Bone meets Glenn Close, the star of *101 Dalmatians* and Hollywood's she-devil

WEEKEND

How a supermarket plan for Hovis country has split the town of Shaftesbury, Dorset

The explosion of a bomb in the heart of Paris has revived a nightmare. France cannot afford to "go it alone" but must now enlist the support of its European partners. The fight against terrorism is international. The creation of a common judicial area, which the 15 EU members will soon debate in Dublin, has never been more urgently required. — *El Pais*, Madrid

Valerie Grove interview: With L-mail Merchant of the Merchant Ivory film-making team. He is a director for whom nothing is impossible and in addition, a wonderful cook.

Page 19

True confessions: What force guides Erica Wagner towards the glowing screen every week, unable to resist the power of *The X-Files*? Page 18

Living with nature: Cormorants are majestic birds and a whiz at fishing. That is what riles fishermen, so they shoot them. Page 19

Caught off-guard: A choice in schooling is being eroded as the obsession with exam results pushes the independent schools to be alike. Page 35

Black picture: Hundreds of disabled children cannot attend local schools. Now a drive to make state schools accessible can win the backing it needs. Page 35

The explosion of a bomb in the heart of Paris has revived a nightmare. France cannot afford to "go it alone" but must now enlist the support of its European partners. The fight against terrorism is international. The creation of a common judicial area, which the 15 EU members will soon debate in Dublin, has never been more urgently required. — *El Pais*, Madrid

John Vassall, Soviet spy: Edward Kasser, music publisher; Babrak Karmal, former President of Afghanistan. Page 23

British Museum funding: police comment on sentencing; UN Secretary-General: godparents: cuts for emergency planning. Page 21

Preview: Pop culture gets a bashing from two likely lads in a bedsit. *The Adam and Joe Show* (Channel 4, 12.10am) Review: Peter Barnard on a brilliant reconstruction of the Hillsborough tragedy. Page 47

A Labour Europe

The Shadow Cabinet is in a state of deep denial over Europe. It cannot face bothering with any EU business that it does not expect to be a "wedge issue" in next year's election campaign. Page 21

Clinton's choices

Ms Albright will have to deal with the perception that she has won the most senior post in American international relations for reasons more concerned with Washington politics than the world. Page 21

Museum of fire

To all friends of the British Museum — among whom *The Times* certainly counts itself — Andrew Edwards's management report, detailed on page six today, must be deeply disturbing. Page 21

BERNARD LEVIN

Again and again, we ask the question, the question that cannot be answered: What was a Jew, or a half-Jew, doing with Adolf Hitler? It is enough that almost all the people concerned are now dead. Page 20

MICHAEL HOWARD

The Government has cross-party support for the Philip Lawrence Memorial Awards, and many organisations have given helpful advice. It is important that the awards complement the various award and grant schemes already in existence. Page 20

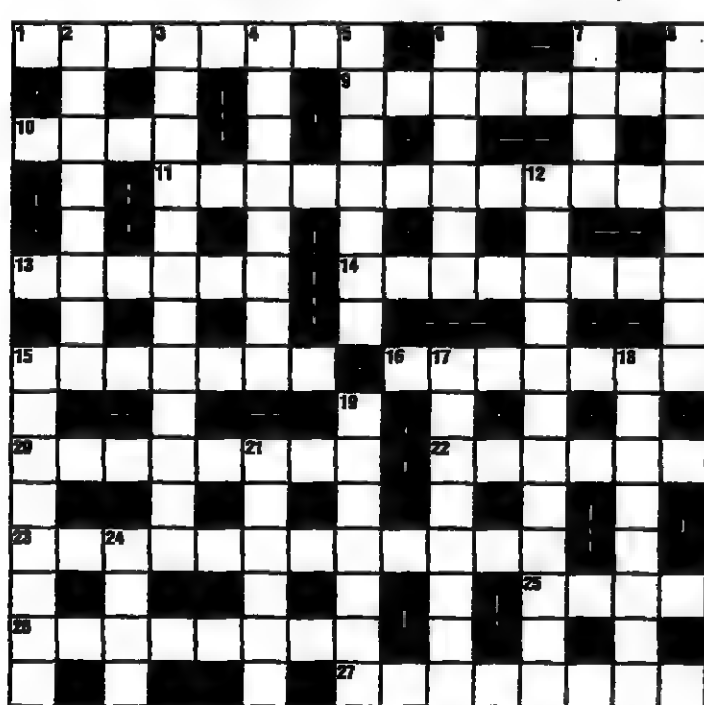
PETER RIDDELL

The Tory party increasingly resembles the Labour Party of the late 1970s and early 1980s, drawn inexorably to the issue which is certain to do it most damage. Page 12

John Vassall, Soviet spy: Edward Kasser, music publisher; Babrak Karmal, former President of Afghanistan. Page 23

British Museum funding: police comment on sentencing; UN Secretary-General: godparents: cuts for emergency planning. Page 21

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,344



- ACROSS
- Shrink that may come to ward (4).
 - Poor attendee revealing slots, perhaps (8).
 - Trip lasting some months in the US (4).
 - Shots from one's side in sort of match to inspire (8,4).
 - Rum through stew recipe (6).
 - Casual worker delayed going to board for guidance (8).
 - Crowded condition of two beasty places one's put in (7).
 - Indulge finally in minor trickery (7).
 - Without parts of tail, rodent is unstable (8).
 - Compelling to reveal information in bed (6).
 - By gum, what a boulder! (4,8).
- DOWN
- Somewhat insane Roman emperor (4).
 - Unstirred with a switch — is that how to teach? (8).
 - All the previous night, whisky available inside (8).
 - Soldiers busy responding to initiative (8).
 - Travel costs, in shoe leather, swallowed up in benefit system (7,5).
 - Chance using a little money to get around detectives (8).
 - Such a speech can be a tonic (7).
 - Place for patient to book in old hospital (6).
 - Dry bed roll given to one (4).
 - I must leave brown study, books being in an awful state (8).
 - Notes my showing singular content after going bankrupt (7,5).
 - Joint veto misused in European assembly (8).
 - Cut tree that's dead on the outside (8).
 - The drone of wood-working (6,2).
 - Fresh people admitted in prison (7).
 - Overambitious high-flier exposed by the Sun (6).
 - Different education at first supported by college (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,343

MAINGAME BLAPSE
A A O O E A
P R A N T Y P A R A M
I O R T B I
T O N D O I R O N H O R S E
I G I S G A O
B I R D S E V E N I E W
S A E A T R N L
L A B Y R I N T H I N E
I R C E B S C
P R O F I T E E R S A U N A
G S E R N T R A
H E A R S E O B S T A N C E
O T U S N E E
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General: England and Wales will be mainly dry with some sunshine, although fog may persist in central parts, becoming widespread. It will be rather cold. Scotland and Northern Ireland will become mostly dry as wintry showers die out.

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London, SE England, E Anglia: cloudy, perhaps some rain in places later. Wind northeast, light or moderate. Max 6C (43F).

Central S England, E Midlands, E England, W Midlands, SW England, S Wales, Central N: dry, with but some fog persisting. Wind light and variable. Max 5C (41F).

Channel Islands: bright or sunny start, perhaps some rain later. Wind northeast, moderate. Max 7C (45F).

N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, SW Scotland: dry with largely clear or sunny skies. Some fog may persist. Wind light and variable. Max 5C (41F).

Aberdeen, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Argyll, N Ireland: isolated showers at first, otherwise sunny or clear spells. Wind mainly southwest, light. Max 5C (41F).

NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: winny showers dying out, some rain later. Wind mainly south or southwest, freshening. Max 4C (39F).

Outlook: some rain in North and West, sunshine elsewhere, although overnight fog and frost slow to lift.

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Sunny

Sunny intervals

Cloudy

Drizzle

Overcast

Rain

Sunny showers

Sleet and sunny showers

Lightning

Hail

Snow

Temperature (Celsius)

Wind speed

Direction

Sea conditions

Warm front

Cold front

Occluded front

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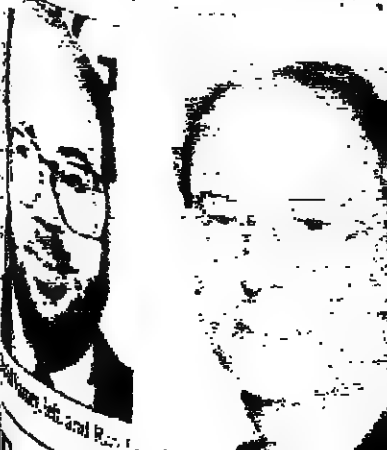


George Eastman

Big pay
feared
gas den

BG plc
centri

New name game
costs £250,000



former Brent

THE TIMES

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TODAY



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Anatole Kaletsky
fears a return of
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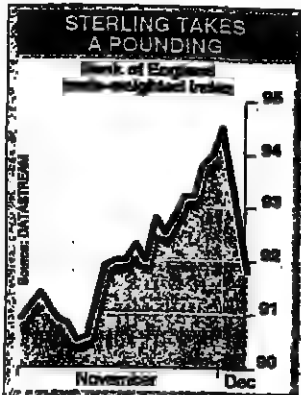
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Lynne Truss makes
her football
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AND
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY DECEMBER 6 1996

George eases pressure for early rise in interest rates



By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, yesterday said that he sees no urgent need for a dramatic rise in interest rates, but strongly suggested that he would still like to see higher rates before the election.

His remarks, in testimony to the Commons Treasury Select Committee, were less hawkish on the need for tighter money than many pessimists in the City had expected, and the odds on a base rate rise at next week's monetary meeting lengthened.

Sterling fell sharply again, while

money markets rallied strongly as the City adjusted its rate expectations down.

Also helping to ease pressure for higher rates yesterday was the latest distributive trades survey from the Confederation of British Industry, which showed that high street sales had slowed slightly in November and that there was a 5.4 per cent fall in new car registrations in the same month. Neither finding suggested that the economy is about to overheat.

Discussing last week's Budget, Mr George said that he agreed with the Chancellor that the package was contractionary, although not dramat-

ically so, and said that the Bank had no quarrel with Kenneth Clarke's improved borrowing projections.

Overall, Mr George said, the Budget had not changed the Bank's view, expressed in its last *Inflation Report* just before the Budget, that rates would probably have to rise in due course if the Government is to hit its inflation target of 2.5 per cent or less. He said that the tone of the report was "specifically designed to suggest that there is no urgent need for a dramatic change" in rates.

However, pressed on whether he believed that interest rates would stay at their current level of 6 per cent

until the election, he said: "I certainly wouldn't go that far."

Mr George's remarks also made clear that any rate rises that the Bank may seek in the months ahead are likely to be modest. He said that, if rates were raised — hypothetically — to 7 per cent now, inflation would fall significantly below 2.5 per cent. This suggests that the Bank is thinking in terms of rate rises of no more than half to three-quarters of a point.

He also told the committee that he did not believe that the economy was heading for an 1980s-style boom.

John Shepperd, chief economist of Yamaichi International Europe, said:

"The Governor has injected a large dose of reality into the money markets, which have been far too pessimistic on rates."

The pound's index against a basket of currencies closed at 91.8, compared with 92.7 on Wednesday. Sterling was quoted at DM2.595, more than three pence below the DM2.562 on the previous day and nearly eleven pence below the peak of DM2.6370 on Monday night, its best level since it left the ERM in 1992.

Retailers confident, page 26
Registrations slump, page 26
Anatole Kaletsky, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCKS (000000)	BRITISH	FOREIGN
FTSE 100	4651.2	(+8.0)
Yield	3.53%	
FTSE All share	1983.73	(+3.84)
Nikkei	20643.90	(+253.99)
Dow Jones	6420.33	(-2.61)*
S&P Composite	744.54	(-0.48)*

BOND YIELD	5% RATE	10% RATE
Federal Funds	5.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	100.1%	(101%)
Yield	8.47%	(8.40%)

3-mth interest	6-mth	9-mth
Libor (Dec)	110%	(111%)

NEW YORK	1.8275*	(1.8433)
Dollar	1.8275	(1.8385)
DM	2.5336	(2.5905)
FF	8.5480	(8.6485)
Yen	2.1441	(2.1676)
S index	155.16	(155.45)
E index	91.5	(92.7)

NEW YORK	1.8275*	(1.8433)
Dollar	1.8275	(1.8385)
DM	2.5336	(2.5905)
FF	8.5480	(8.6485)
Yen	2.1441	(2.1676)
S index	155.16	(155.45)
E index	91.5	(92.7)

BRITISH	FOREIGN
Brant 15-day (Feb)	823.40 (823.06)
London close	8370.00 (8368.95)

* denotes midday trading price

Going shopping
Great Universal Stores confirmed an interest in buying the Freeman's catalogue business but fears a bid would run into problems with the Monopolies Commission. Gus also revealed its first profits decline in 48 years. Page 30, *Tempos* 28

Bad reading
Reed Elsevier, the publisher, warned the market of tough trading in several parts of its business, sending the shares down 64p to £10.87. Stockbrokers have trimmed earnings forecasts. Page 31, *Tempos* 28

Big payout cut feared after gas demerger

By CARL MORTIMER
AND OLIVER AUGUST

THE City fears a big cut in dividend will follow the demerger of British Gas into separate trading and pipeline companies. The concerns emerged after the utility revealed details of the structure of the two new companies and announced it had agreed with British Petroleum the first renegotiation of take-or-pay gas contracts.

British Gas shares initially surged on news that it had secured a breakthrough in reducing its £2.3 billion liability on high-priced gas contracts. However, the share price fell as City analysts absorbed the implications and some predicted that the payout next year could fall to 5p.

British Gas will pay 14.5p net this year, including an 8.1p final. But the company indicated that the dividend would be cut. "This payment should not



New faces of British Gas

be taken as a guide to likely future levels of dividend which are expected to be materially lower."

From February, the utility's 19 million customers will start receiving bills from a gas trading utility renamed Centrica. Roy Gardner, chief executive designate of the new company, confirmed that it will pay no dividends in the immediate future, leaving the pipeline and exploration company as the source of future payouts. However, the renamed BG plc intends to financially ring fence its two businesses.

David Varney, chief execu-

tive designate of BG plc, said the upstream exploration business would become self-financing. The dividend will be paid out of TransCo's current cost profit after servicing its regulatory capital and after paying tax. Mr Varney said the dividend would be affected by the MMC inquiry into TransCo's pricing formula. British Gas appealed against the Ofgas formula, which it said would cut £400 million from its after-tax cash flow.

Analysts were shocked by the dividend implications. One suggested that if the company had paid its 1995 dividend on the same basis, the payout would have been 5.7p, not 14.5p.

British Gas will pay £293 million to reduce the price of certain take-or-pay contracts. In a package of deals with BP and its own upstream gas production arm, the company will reduce its commitment by 2.8 billion therms and reduce the price to a market level on a further 13.5 billion therms.

Richard Giordano, chairman, said that the total 16 billion therms was "about 10 per cent of the volume we would like to address". He indicated that BP was not the largest party with which British Gas will have to renegotiate contracts.

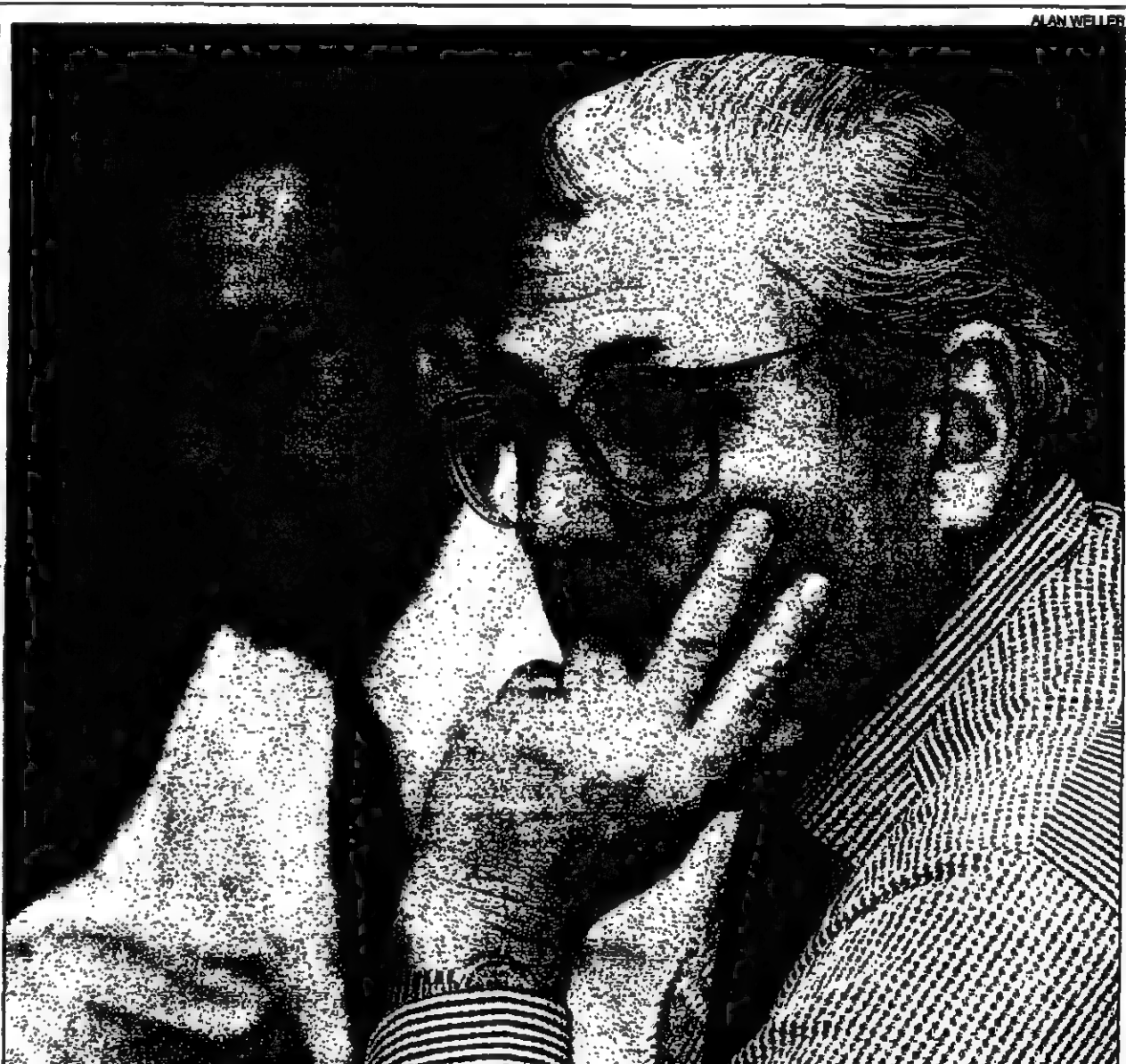
BP will receive most of the £293 million payment but the take-or-pay renegotiations did not include Morecambe Bay, the massive gasfield which will form part of Centrica. Mr Giordano predicted that future take-or-pay deals would involve assets rather than cash payments.

The demerger announcement is believed to have been held up for several weeks by the contract renegotiations. The timetable for the demerger shows the publication of demerger details on January 10. Trading in Centrica and BG shares will start on February 17 if the demerger is approved.

Mr Giordano will be chairman at both new companies but is expected to resign at Centrica within the first 12 months after the demerger.

Philip Rogers, the British Gas deputy chairman, will perform the same role at BG.

Dame Stella Rimington, the former head of MI5, will become a BG non-executive director. Mr Varney said she had been chosen for her "insights into government and foreign affairs".



George Bull, right, chairman, with John McGrath, chief executive, yesterday. They will consider tax options of the buyback.

New name game costs £250,000

BRITISH Gas spent £250,000 on finding new names for its two soon to be demerged businesses, BG and Centrica, (Oliver August writes).

The name Centrica, which the company hopes will soon be as familiar as British Gas itself, is meant to convey a sense of change that marketing men felt was needed after the recent troubles over billing and disconnections.

British Gas said yesterday: "Most people in this country still think we are the gas board. The new names will avoid any confusion."

The British Gas brand name will still be used by Centrica as a part of its corporate identity in the UK

and by BG overseas. Both names were developed by Interbrand, a London consultancy. Simon Mottram, a director, said Centrica was coined from central. "It suggests a centralising source and supply network and, by extension, one which is safe and reliable."

Interbrand initially generated hundreds of names and British Gas chose a selection from a shortlist of 20.

These names were then investigated to see whether they were legally available around the world. Interbrand said it was important to make sure names were not culturally offensive or daft in other languages.



David Varney, left, and Roy Gardner will head the companies

Venture capitalist sues HSBC

By JAMON NISSE

A VENTURE capitalist is suing HSBC Holdings for more than £1 million in bonus due, he says, after he retired. Hugh de Quervain, who until December 1992 was managing director of the venture capital arm of Midland Bank, now part of HSBC, is claiming he should be paid his share of the profits of HSBC Private Equity Europe for five years after his departure.

In 1988 he joined the business's executive incentive scheme, receiving £1.7 million of bonus payments in five years. A new scheme was drawn up before Mr de Quervain departed in 1992, under which he claims, payouts were due for five years after he left.

HSBC says Mr de Quervain is not entitled to the money since he became a non-executive director of the Henry Ainsbacher Acquisition Fund that invested in South Africa. HSBC says this is a competing business. Mr de Quervain says the fund does not operate in Europe.

GrandMet plans share buyback

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GRAND METROPOLITAN, the food and drinks company, is to seek shareholder permission to launch a share buyback.

John McGrath, chief executive, said yesterday that a share buyback is definitely "on the agenda" but the company has to examine its tax options before deciding when to proceed. GrandMet will ask for shareholder approval to buy back up to 10 per cent of the company's share capital — worth around £950 million at yesterday's closing price — although the company emphasises that it is unlikely to make such a large repurchase.

Mr McGrath's comments came as the company unveiled a 6 per cent rise in full-year profits before tax and exceptional charges, to £965 million. Exceptional charges totalled £590 million and mainly relate to write-downs following the sale of the European food businesses during the year.

The results were largely in line with expectations but analysts' fears over the surging pound hitting the company's dollar profits caused

shares to slip back 10.5p to 446p. GrandMet hedges 80 per cent of its US profits but analysts calculate that profits could fall by around £30 million as a result of the impact of non-hedged profits from countries with currencies that track the dollar.

The improvement in performance was led by Pillsbury, the food business, which recorded a 30 per cent rise in operating profits, to £431 million. International Distillers and Vintners, the drinks business, also turned in an improved performance, with operating profits increasing by 4 per cent to £471 million.

The BSE share hit profits at Burger King, which fell by 15 per cent to £167 million. GrandMet said that the company had lost around £10 million as a result of the crisis in Britain and Germany, although sales at the burger chain had now returned to normal.

The total dividend was increased by 7 per cent, to 16p. A final dividend of 10.05p is payable on April 7.

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Former Brent Walker aide guilty in £19m cover-up

By ROBERT MILLER

A FORMER finance director of Goldcrest, Brent Walker's film-making subsidiary, was yesterday convicted at Southwark Crown Court of attempting to pervert the course of justice in a £19 million cover-up.

Donald Anderson, 43, a chartered accountant, was the missing defendant in the first Brent Walker trial in 1994. At that trial George Walker was

acquitted and Wilfred Aquilina was convicted on a charge of false accounting and given an 18-month prison sentence suspended for two years and fined £25,000.

During the two-month trial at which 34 witnesses were called, the court heard that Anderson, a New Zealand citizen who lives in Richmond, Surrey, was involved in the creation of false documents between August 1988 and October 1990 to cover up £19 million of

bogus profits recorded by the Brent Walker Group between 1984 and 1987. The Serious Fraud Office which brought the prosecutions said Anderson was involved in laundering £19.5 million through the Bahamas and the Isle of Man.

Anderson fled the UK in July 1992 during the course of a series of interviews with SFO investigators who worked with the Metropolitan Police fraud squad. Warrants for his

arrest were issued on two occasions in January and March 1993. He returned to Britain and surrendered to police custody in November 1995.

The Crown case, headed by Peter Rook, QC, was that Brent Walker funded his own profits itself and companies which appeared to be independent, were falsely put forward as genuine third party customers. One of the so-called independent companies was UTM Jersey to which

more than £10 million of profits were booked. Anderson was paid by the Brent Walker group for covering up the fraud and on at least three occasions collected bearer bonds and cash worth £700,000 from Geneva which had been laundered through the Bahamas and Liechtenstein.

Last night Anderson, who was convicted on a 10-2 majority verdict after 26 hours of deliberation, was in custody pending a possible sentence today.

Tunstall declines to £8m

Tunstall Group, which provides specialist communications for the healthcare sector and social services, suffered a decline in pre-tax profits to £8.19 million, from £9.6 million in the year to September 30.

Comparable results for the previous year were helped by an exceptional credit of £1.35 million, but Michael Dawson, chairman, admitted that the results were below expectations.

Tunstall shares fell 32½p to 261p. In spite of a fall in earnings per share to 17.7p, from 21.1p, the total dividend is increased by 14.5 per cent to 5p a share with a 3.32p final.

Strong pound hitting Crown

Crown Products, the crafts, toys and giftware company, yesterday said that the current strength of sterling would affect profits of its flagship Hong Kong subsidiary.

With 40 per cent of sales denominated in Hong Kong or US dollars, the company gave warning that the currency impact, together with costs of merging two of its acquisitions, would leave profits below expectations.

Crown's shares, which joined the Alternative Investment Market at 50p last September, plunged from 33½p to 17½p yesterday, but partially recovered to close at 22½p.

Lovell loss

YJ Lovell, the housing and construction group, reduced its losses in the year to September 30, as it paid off half of its £54 million debt and sold its non-core businesses. Although sales fell to £254 million (from £301 million), a sharp drop in administration costs and a £139 million profit from disposals cut pre-tax losses to £11.8 million (losses of £32.4 million). A housing recovery in south-east England helped, but the overcrowded market maintained pressure on margins. Losses were 32.5p a share (84p loss). There is no dividend.



James Tuckey, chief executive of MEPC, said that the performance of the property company's UK portfolio was much as expected

Confidence of retailers at its highest since 1988

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

HIGH STREET retailers yesterday forecast a good Christmas in spite of new evidence suggesting a slight slowdown in retail sales.

Retail sales volumes slowed slightly in November, against expectations, the latest distributive trades survey from the Confederation of British Industry showed yesterday. But confidence among retailers is at its highest level since 1988.

CBI figures showed that the net balance of high street outlets reporting an increase in sales fell from 55 per cent in October to 48 per cent last month. But high sales are forecast for this month, when 53 per cent are expecting greater sales volumes.

CBI leaders pointed out that the three-month moving average figure remained broadly steady, at 50 per cent.

Alastair Eperon, CBI distributive trades survey panel chairman, said: "The upward trend in underlying sales remains encouragingly steady and consumers are expected to

raise their spending in the run up to Christmas."

In spite of high street confidence continuing to increase, with a net balance of 37 per cent expecting their overall position to improve — the strongest rate since August 1988 — Mr Eperon denied comparisons with the boom of the late 1980s, which preceded

the recession of the early 1990s. The CBI said shoppers were now more careful, and more cautious about price, with strong competition among retailers limiting their ability to raise prices. Average selling prices fell back from 51 to 36 per cent of companies surveyed. The CBI also said that high street sales growth

had also been running for only about a year, compared with two or three years of high growth in the late 1980s.

On the basis of the survey of 15,000 retail, wholesale and motor trade outlets, the CBI said there was no evidence for any further rise in interest rates, with average selling prices in the shops rising at their slowest rate this year.

Retail sectors most closely related to the housing market, such as furniture, hardware, china, DIY and durable goods all saw some growth in sales compared with a year ago.

Employment in retailing continued to rise, after what CBI leaders said was a "significant" pickup in August, and investment intentions for the year ahead remained positive.

Wholesalers' sales volumes picked up by more than expected, rising at the quickest rate since September last year, while motor sales improved only slightly in November, after modest growth in the preceding two months.

Slowdown in car sales disappoints makers

THE growing momentum of the recovery in new car sales was halted last month with a 5 per cent year-on-year fall in registrations during November (Jonathan Pryor writes).

The sales dip came as a grave disappointment to car manufacturers, after October's record figures prompted hopes of a new economic boom.

Last month's sales totalled 135,342, just under 5 per cent down on October's figure and

a 5.4 per cent drop from November last year. Private sales were down 6.1 per cent and fleet registration dropped 4.9 per cent.

The October figures, which were boosted by the Birmingham Motor Show, showed a 13 per cent annual increase.

In spite of the subsequent slackening of demand, this year's sales are still up nearly 4 per cent on the first 11 months of 1995.

Writedown in US hits MEPC net asset value

By MARTIN BAKER

MEPC, the property company, disappointed the City with full-year figures that valued its property portfolio at 450p a share, a 7p fall in net asset value since last year.

The company declared, itself pleased with a 14 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £140 million, from £122.6 million, but some analysts remained sceptical about even this figure. Critics pointed to a £4.3 million release of provisions arising from the company's withdrawal from the European market.

Much of the diminution in net asset value was attributed to a £31 million writedown of the Northridge Mall in Los Angeles.

The mall has had to be rebuilt because of an earthquake, and the refurbished centre has yet to recover its earlier levels of business. Michael Blakenham, chairman of MEPC, described the writedown as "the most disappointing event of the year".

Earnings per share rose 9 per cent to 22.9p. A final dividend of 14.75p is to be paid on February 5, leaving the total unchanged at 20p a share. MEPC's shares immediately fell back more than 2 per cent on the news, and closed 12p down at 440½p.

There were few surprises elsewhere. James Tuckey, chief executive of MEPC, said that "the performance of the UK portfolio, which accounts for 70 per cent of the group, is indeed where we would have expected it to be".

Newmont bids \$2bn for Santa Fé Pacific

NEWMONT Mining has tabled an unsolicited all-shares takeover bid that values Santa Fé Pacific Gold Corporation at \$2 billion. The proposed combination would create the largest gold company in North America. Newmont said. Newmont, based in Denver, has sent a letter to the Santa Fé board in Albuquerque, offering 0.33 shares for each Santa Fé share.

Based on Newmont's share price of \$47.875 yesterday, the offer would be worth \$15.80 a share to Santa Fé shareholders. Santa Fé was trading at \$13.375 when both issues were halted on the New York Stock Exchange pending the proposed merger announcement. Ron Cambre, Newmont chairman, said: "The combination of Newmont and Santa Fé Pacific would be a win-win proposition for the stockholders of both companies." A spokesman for Newmont also said Newmont had been in talks with Santa Fé "from time to time" but declined to elaborate.

'Unfair' ring-back

OFTEL, the phone regulator, told BT that it has unfairly introduced its ring-back service, which informs customers when a line they have called becomes disengaged. Don Cruickshank, director-general, said BT "unfairly favoured" its own business by failing to notify the industry that the service would be introduced. OfTel said customers may have incurred unwanted charges because they were not adequately informed that the service was not free. He ordered BT to compensate them.

Treasury plans OEICs

THE Treasury yesterday produced plans to introduce European-style Open Ended Investment Companies (OEICs) to the UK, which could spark upheaval in the unit and investment trust industry. Treasury sources claimed that fund management firms may lose out unless they convert existing funds. "The whole OEICs package will offer much more flexibility to the investor," a Treasury spokesman said. OEICs offer a variety of classes of shares tailored to customers' needs.

Rothschild rating raised

J ROTHSCCHILD ASSURANCE has raised £12 million of extra capital from its founders to increase its Standard & Poor's credit rating. The increase in capital, through a subscription for redeemable preference shares by St James's Place Capital, Scottish Amicable and Sir Mark Weinberg, will raise the rating from B to BBB, in keeping with other insurance companies, such as NatWest Life. Sir Mark said it was being done to meet rating agencies' technical requirements.

Hawtal issues warning

SHARES in Hawtal Whiting tumbled 29p to 105p yesterday as the car design company gave warning that it will do little better than break even in the second half. The company blamed the strengthening of sterling, continued poor US results and "an unexpectedly high level of quotation activity". Hawtal Whiting said quoting for new business had become significantly more time consuming and costly, but added that this would bring benefits through better programme control.

Surplus for Exchange

INCREASED trading volumes helped the London Stock Exchange to lift its income by £11.2 million to £105.5 million in the six months to September 30. Costs were cut by 3 per cent during the period to £65.6 million, leaving the Exchange with an operating surplus of nearly £39.9 million. After tax and provisions for the move towards an order-driven trading system next year, the London exchange reported a surplus of £9.7 million.

C&W appointment

CABLE AND WIRELESS is making Robert Lerwill its finance director in succession to Rod Olsen, who became deputy chief executive in July. Mr Lerwill, 44, is currently finance director of WPP Group, the world's largest marketing services company, whose businesses include J Walter Thompson, Richard Brown, the new chief executive of C&W, which operates in more than 50 countries, cited Mr Lerwill's expertise in international financing as his main advantage.

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GM to sell divisions of Hughes

FROM RICHARD THOMPSON IN NEW YORK

THE defence and aerospace divisions of Hughes Electronics, the world's second largest defence electronics contractor, are being put up for sale by its owner, General Motors, for about \$8 billion.

The auction is expected to attract buyers such as McDonnell Douglas, Raytheon and Northrup Grumman. The divisions being sold contribute nearly half of Hughes's total revenues and include defence electronics, missiles, air traffic control systems and information technology.

Hughes said the sale would help it to refocus on the fast growing and increasingly lucrative satellite communications business. This includes its DirectTV satellite television operation which has been trying to break into the European market.

GM has been looking to spin off or sell Hughes which has been involved in many key technological developments, such as building the world's first laser, to concentrate on motor manufacturing. GM is expected to absorb Hughes's auto-electronics business but it may spin off DirectTV, analysts said. Last summer GM floated Electronic Data Systems, the information software group.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$	2.18	2.00
Austria Sch	13.76	13.76
Belgium Fr	53.78	51.46
Canada \$	2.525	2.176
Cyprus Cyp	0.805	0.750
Denmark Kr	10.36	8.48
Finland Mk	6.23	7.68
France Fr	9.06	8.41
Germany Dr	2.71	2.56
Greece Dr	419	394
Hong Kong \$	10.35	12.35
India Rs	120	100
Ireland Pt	1.05	0.97
Israel Shk	5.09	5.04
Italy Lit	268	247
Japan Yen	160.30	160.30
Malta	0.437	0.582
Netherlands Gld	0.692	0.782
New Zealand \$	9.48	2.27
Norway Kr	11.24	10.44
Portugal Esc	200.48	201.00
Spain Ptas	222.50	208.50
Sweden Kr	11.80	11.00
Switzerland Fr	2.30	2.12
Turkey Lira	170000	167000
USA \$	1.740	1.613

Notes for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

GUS THE GREAT UNIVERSAL STORES PLC

UNAUDITED RESULTS FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1996

HIGHLIGHTS

	1996	1995
• TURNOVER	£1,211.8m	£1,203.0m
• OPERATING PROFIT	£191.7m	£193.7m
• PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION	£235.6m	£237.5m
• EARNINGS PER SHARE	15.5p	15.7p
• INTERIM DIVIDEND PER SHARE	5.5p	5.0p

"As foreshadowed at the Annual General Meeting, in October the unaudited accounts for the half year show turnover increased by 0.7% and pre-tax profit lower by 0.8%.

Trade continues to be difficult in the Home Shopping Division. The strengthening of the pound since September, if maintained at the year end, will have a significant effect on the translation of the results of the overseas subsidiaries, particularly South Africa and Holland.

Trading performance for the second half is expected to follow the pattern of the first six months."

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale
Chairman

The Great Universal Stores PLC
Universal House, Devonshire Street,
Manchester M60 1XA

Im
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PowerGen
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the mo
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□ British Gas cannot yet chart its future □ Tougher powers needed for regulators □ Green giant still to deliver gold

Turn off the gas plan

IN PRINCIPLE, demerging British Gas was a good idea. But the world is full of ideas that are good in principle but do not work in practice. On the meagre facts available, the only certainty is that dividends would be slashed, perhaps from 14.5p to as low as 5p per share. If so, shareholders should vote the plan down.

At British Gas, some things are moving so fast that plans become out of date almost as soon as they are made. Others, such as resolving the contract dispute foisted on the group by Ofgas, are moving so slowly that they hamper any new strategy.

Presenting meaningful proposals for shareholders to decide in February looks like an exercise in painting air in the dark. BG plc, the imaginatively named new holding company for the Transco gas pipeline system, North Sea gas production and overseas operations, depends critically on Transco's price limits and regulatory regime, issues now in the hands of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The MMC's rulings will determine future cashflow and profitability. They will also critically influence the sensible financial structure for Transco and therefore BG's dividend policy. Richard Giordano, who would unfortunately remain chairman, proposes that the net current profit of Transco should be

devoted to paying dividends. If that alone was used, dividends could be less than 6p a share before Ofgas deprecations.

Centrica, the demerged gas supply business, would pay no regular dividend. How could it forecast any, when computing incompetence makes income a matter of guesswork, when its crucial overpriced take-or-pay contracts are still unresolved, and when their resolution might remove part or all of the Morecambe Bay field, its chief tangible asset? Centrica's potential value is as the distribution arm of some future multi-utility.

Unless the MMC comes to conclusions radically different from those of Ofgas, there is no case for encouraging a potentially good but cash-absorbing energy production and management business with a semi-nationalised utility from which sane investors would wish to extract as much cash as possible as fast as they decently can.

Only by separating Transco as a separate quoted company, as the regulator always wanted, could its dire future be properly and usefully exposed. Its true

cost of capital would then be revealed. The *sine qua non* of a separate Transco would be to pay dividends at least at the current British Gas rate indexed to prices or earnings. Funds thus withdrawn would be replaced with loans at market rates, if Transco was not permitted a proper return. Only by establishing the true market rate for equity and debt can Transco persuade its regulators to allow an economic return.

That would leave shareholders with one more dodgy piece of paper. As yesterday's plan suggests, however, their interests rarely coincide with the board's.

Watchdogs need an eye on the ball

THE great, the good, and the not so good among financial watchdogs gathered in London yesterday to debate "City regulation in the 21st Century: Evolution or Radical Change?" They should worry about the rest of this decade first.

A rumour swept the conference floor that Sir Andrew



PENNINGTON

Large, chairman of the Securities and Investments Board, whose lucrative contract was due to expire next April had won a further two years. First question: Why? Although an able operator, Sir Andrew has singularly failed to clear up the £4 billion personal pensions mis-selling scandal.

Having finally woken up to what was going on in the industry, the SIB passed the bulk of the work to the fledgling Personal Investment Authority led by Colette Bowe. The PIA was ill-equipped to deal with the massive problem and, despite its protestations to the contrary, is still struggling badly with the pensions review. It claims that PIA rules make handing out draconian fines and penalties for

foot-draggers a long-drawn-out process. But progress is what counts, not punishment. In any case, fellow watchdog Imro, albeit with a smaller workload on pensions, has handed out some stiff fines and harsh words.

Yesterday's conference was also enlivened by the neat political jousting among regulators for top job under a possible Labour administration. Mike O'Brien, Labour's City spokesman, gave little away beyond his tidy desire to fold all the watchdogs into one body.

Angela Knight, the Treasury Economic Secretary, still chews primary legislation to change the Financial Services Act. As often argued in this column, however, watchdogs need tougher powers, not least to lessen reliance on courts.

Christopher Sharpley, former head of the Securities and Futures Authority, argues: "We now have a professional cadre of regulators. Practitioners, while playing an important role, are no longer as mission-critical as they once were." If some regulators have come of age, they still lack tools to do the best job.

Uncertainty is also tempting the best to jump ship and join the private sector. That would be no help to investors.

GrandMet yet to purge its past

GRAND Metropolitan used to resemble its Häagen-Dazs ice cream — stylishly packaged and superficially exciting but at heart not nearly as sexy as the advertising promised. Under John McGrath, its new chief executive, the group has fallen over itself to purge that disappointment, neatly linked to former chairman Lord Sheppard, and convince the City that the virtues of brand building and bolt-on acquisitions are a bigger turn-on than scattergun megadeals.

GrandMet has ruled out big buys and has finally managed to brush aside talk of demerger, for the time being. Instead, it is talking up the benefits of a share buy-back, although shareholders will not see any cash the board cares to return to them for at least a year.

For all the dedicated pruning

by the new top team, the previous sins of GrandMet still linger. It was forced to charge £550 million more "exceptional" losses in its latest accounts and there will be more as disposals continue this year. There are also near-forgotten basket cases, notably Intreprenur, which GrandMet is a long way from burying. Even Häagen-Dazs, epitome of the "new" GrandMet, is yet to make a profit in its European operations after 5 years. This is hardly reassuring as Pillsbury favourites start to be promoted heavily in Europe.

The measure of the task is that GrandMet still earns less on its assets than its nominal combined cost of capital, even if the gap is starting to close. For all the attempts at reform, the ghost of the past is set to haunt it for another Christmas or two.

Courtesy counts

RUDE colonials Julian Treger and Brian Myerson did nothing for their image by failing to turn up for the extraordinary meeting of Greycoat they called as part of a campaign by their UK Active Value that has cost the stretched property company £300,000 to no apparent purpose. Kenwood Appliances, their latest target, will hope to avoid active value being destroyed by clumsy smash and grab tactics.

PowerGen in £200m buyback

POWERGEN, the electricity generator, spent £202.7 million buying back 5 per cent of its shares yesterday, its third buyback in the past 12 months (Keith Rodgers writes).

It bought 33.5 million shares through Kleinwort Benson and UBS at 605p a share, against an opening price of 571.5p. The shares closed at 589p.

Powergen originally indicated that it would buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares when it announced the programme with interim results last month. The company refused to comment on further purchases yesterday, but analysts believe that it may buy a further tranche in spring.

In the past year, PowerGen has bought back two tranches, worth 4.8 and 5.3 per cent of its share capital.

Imperial Tobacco to step up expansion overseas

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GARETH DAVIS, chief executive of Imperial Tobacco Group, revealed yesterday that the company was aiming to accelerate its expansion internationally to compensate for the static UK cigarette market.

Mr Davis said that the 15p increase in duty on cigarettes, announced in last week's Budget, would put further pressure on the total market size in the UK, although he added that Imperial was confident of maintaining volumes.

Imperial, which makes brands such as Regal, Embassy, John Player Special and Superkings, yesterday unveiled a 5 per cent increase in full-year profits, excluding interest and tax, to £365 million. Turnover rose by 7 per cent to £3.8 billion, while the trading

margin rose from 46.6 per cent to 47.8 per cent.

The results, which cover the company's last year as part of Hanson before its demerger in October, were well received in the City. Imperial's shares closed up 4½p at 373½p compared with an opening demerger quote of 375p.

The international division led the improvement with a 55 per cent increase in profits to £70 million. JPS American brand continued to make inroads in France and Imperial now has a 4 per cent market share. Export sales of Golden Virginia also continued to grow, especially in Belgium, although the company said much of the growth related to tobacco smuggling because of excise differences with the UK.

The company added that it



Davis: aiming to cut debt

was continuing to build a solid foundation in Greater China and other parts of the Asia-Pacific region and had recently launched sales of Superkings in South Africa.

In contrast, UK profits were flat at £303 million although

the company increased its share of the market from 37.1 per cent to 38.2 per cent. Mr Davis added that the trend in UK tobacco market away from higher price brands had benefited Lambert & Butler brands, which now account for 11 per cent of total UK market.

Imperial is facing 12 legal cases for smoking damages in the UK, including the first no-win, no-fee case led by Leigh, Day and Co. the solicitors. But the company said it is confident that it will ultimately see off the legal challenge.

Imperial inherited a debt pile of £1.1 billion after demerger and Mr Davis said it is aiming to reduce this over the coming year using the company's strong cash flow. There is no dividend.

Tempus, page 28

Hanson delivers dividend cut

By MARTIN BAKER

HANSON, the conglomerate that recently demerged its tobacco and chemicals businesses, delivered a larger than expected cut in its effective dividend rate yesterday, as it reported full year pre-tax profits of £1.8 billion, up from £1.32 billion last year.

This year's figures were bolstered by an exceptional gain on disposals of £609 million. Fully diluted earnings per share were 25.6p, compared with 18.2p last year. A dividend of 1p will be paid on January 10 for the first quarter, although the group is to discontinue its practice of announcing quarterly dividends in favour of semi-annual payments, Andrew Dougal, finance director, said.

During its long years of unbroken success, Hanson consistently delivered steadily improving dividends. The

break-up of the group has brought about a sharp cut in the dividend stream from the on-going companies.

Hanson floated Millennium Chemicals and Imperial Tobacco this autumn, and its energy group is due to be demerged by February. The building materials and equipment divisions will remain as the "new" Hanson. Mr Dougal said that the demerger was on track.

Within the group, building materials and equipment had to cope with "a tough year". ARC's profits slipped to £69 million (£84 million) Hanson Brick also reported smaller profits of £27 million (£38 million). In the energy division, Eastern performed above expectations, adding £303 million to an overall energy division profit of £458 against

£167 million in 1995.

Profits slip at London Clubs

HIGH ROLLERS stayed away from London's casinos in the first half of the year, causing the interim profits of London Clubs to slip to £19.1 million, from £19.2 million last year (Alasdair Murray writes).

Alan Goodenough, chief executive, said that the company's middle and lower-market casinos had performed strongly, but profits at the up-market venues — especially the Ritz — had suffered because of a low win/drop ratio. London Clubs is on the verge of relocating the Ritz club to a new site in St James's Street, London, so that it can improve facilities.

Overall turnover rose 9 per cent to £94 million. The interim dividend rises 5 per cent to 2.625p, due on January 31.

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The Financial Times 7/10/96 (from MORI survey)



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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Reed shares slump after gloomy trading warning

A SHARP fall in the price of Reed International took some of the edge off another robust performance by the London stock market.

Shares of Reed dropped 64p to £10.87, after touching £11.86 earlier. The fall came after a gloomy trading statement from Reed Elsevier, the company owned jointly by Reed International and Elsevier of The Netherlands.

The Anglo Dutch publishing group told the market that the group's strength could wipe 4 per cent off pre-tax profits in the full year. This compares with the 2 per cent contribution currency transactions made to the outcome in the first six months.

HSBC James Capel, the broker, then added to Reed International's woes by downgrading its profit estimates for full year. It is thought Capel has lopped off £70 million from its original forecast of £960 million.

Earlier in the day, the equity market had been fuelled by positive news from a clutch of blue-chip companies and claims from Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, that he was in no rush to push up interest rates again. This had enabled the FT-SE 100 index to climb above its closing high of 4,073.1 achieved on October 21.

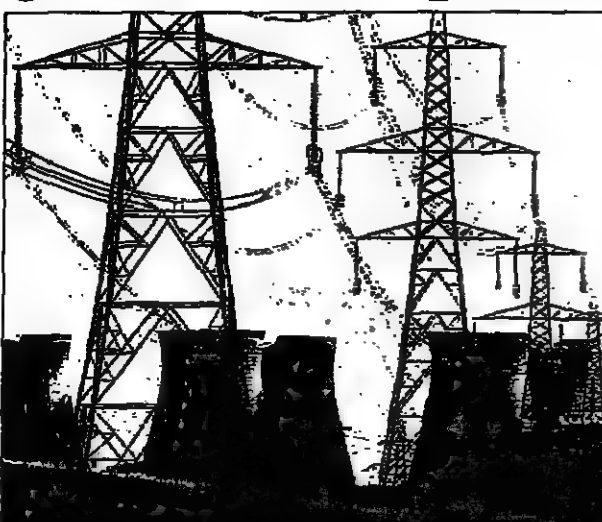
It touched 4,076.0 after another opening fall on Wall Street took its toll. The index closed 6.0 up at 4,051.2, 2.9 million shares.

The market warmed to news from British Gas. The price touched 229p before settling 3p up at 237p after the company unveiled demerger proposals and announced it had unwound some of its costly "take-or-pay" North Sea gas contracts.

Under the terms of the deal, British Gas has agreed to fork out £293 million, allowing it to reduce orders for gas supplies by 2.8 billion therms in the next five years with a price reduction on a further £13.5 billion terms.

The group now has to reach similar deals with other suppliers. The take-or-pay deals cost it about £500 million a year. British Gas has also published the timetable for next year's flotation of its trading arm to be called Centrica.

PowerGen also stood out with a rise of 17p at 589p after the arrangement for a



PowerGen stood out with an increase of 17p to 589p

buyback of 5 per cent of its issued share capital. Kleinwort Benson and UBS, the brokers, paid 605p for 33.5 million shares. A total of 37.4 million shares had traded by the close.

BT was another firm market, climbing 13p to 399p on the back of arbitraging between BT shares and those of MCI in the US. Earlier there

were reports that MCI was about to sell part of its operation to avoid upsetting regulators before the proposed merger between the two companies. Sir Peter Bonfield, chief executive of BT, picked up 130,000 at 363p, or £471,000, as part of a remuneration package.

British Energy firmed up to 141p. The shares have been a weak market this week after

debt of £577 million. Brokers have begun downgrading their forecasts for the full year because of worries over the impact of strong sterling on profits. The price finished 10p lower at 446p.

There were few surprises in full-year figures from Hanson, with profits growing to £1.8 billion boosted by disposal gains of £609 million. Even so, there was heavy turnover

in the shares with 26.7 million traded as the price firmed 4p to 80p. Imperial Group, which was hived off earlier this year from Hanson, finished 4p better at 373p.

A profits warning left Crown Products 11p lower at 22p. The extra cost of merging TAG and Levermore is going to leave profits in 1996 below market expectations. The company is feeling the effects of a strong pound, which has risen 10 per cent against the Hong Kong dollar.

Full-year figures from Great Universal Stores received a lukewarm response from the City, with the price falling 24p to 651p as brokers again focused on the problems with the group's mail-order operation. Nick

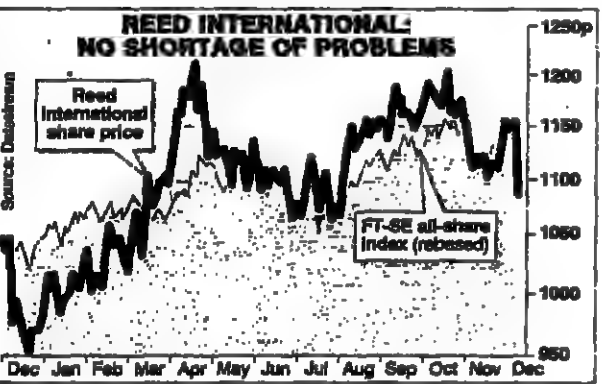
Bubb, retail analyst at Mees Pierson, the broker, said that the market had been carried away by the recent acquisition of Experian and gave a warning there was no quick fix for the mail-order business.

Cadentree made an encouraging start to first-time trading after a placing by Albert E. Sharp at 200p. Shares in the group, which specialises in 3D computer systems for cable projects, opened at 232p before racing up to 240p. The price eventually settled at 240p, a premium of 40p as almost 1.5 million shares changed hands. News of an agreed bid sent Gradus 34p higher at 159p.50. Headlam fell 5p to 278p.

GILT EDGED: Eddie George's apparent reluctance to raise rates again hit the bond market for six as the spectre of higher inflation came back to haunt investors. In the futures pit, the March series of the Long Gilt fell sharply. After reaching a high for the day of £111.16, it closed £2.32 lower at £109.84 as 87,000 contracts were completed.

In the cash market opening gains were quickly wiped out, leaving losses of more than £1 at the longer end. Treasury 8 per cent 2015 fell £1.12 to £109.16, while in shorts, Treasury 3 per cent 2000 was £1.16 lower at £103.83.

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks were slightly lower in early trading, dragged down by a sell-off in the bond market. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 2.61 points to 6,420.33.



Reed International share price

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 6420.33 (-2.61)

S&P Composite 744.61 (-0.49)

Tokyo 2094.00 (-20.59)

Hong Kong 12971.56 (-37.22)

Amsterdam 628.44 (-2.50)

Sydney 2893.3 (-12.4)

Frankfurt 2908.91 (+43.49)

Singapore 2214.17 (+19.01)

Brussels 1052.50 (+12.11)

Paris 2282.50 (+16.13)

Zurich 628.80 (+2.39)

London 2991.1 (-2.6)

FTSE 100 4051.2 (-6.0)

FTSE 250 2021.1 (-3.7)

FTSE 1000 1093.7 (-2.8)

FT All-Share 1983.7 (-3.6)

FT Non-Financials 2091.1 (-2.8)

FT Financials 1741.1 (-0.2)

FT Com. Secs 2511.1 (+0.2)

Barrington 177.4

SEAQ Volume 910.8m

USM (Midwest) 191.16 (+0.23)

USM (East) 1.63 (+0.12)

German Mark 2.525 (-0.002)

Exchange Index 91.8 (-0.9)

Bank of England official base (4pm) 5.50%

EASDA 1.152

RPI 153.8 Oct (2.7%) Jan 1997-100

RPIX 153.6 Oct (3.5%) Jan 1997-100

Access Plus (X) 100%

Advanced Power Cn 79%

Bechtel 4

Brands Hatch Ltd 187%

Britt Allcott 152%

Cadentree 240%

Car Group 16%

Charterhouse 121%

Down VII Dusk 162%

Deep Sea Ltd (160) 314%

Druid Cn 97%

Ester Int 587%

Future Int Tele (115) 126%

GEO Interactive 100

Goshawk Int 122%

Grantham Higgs 131%

Kern River 30%

Majestic Wines 227%

Oliver Ashworth 135

Provent (125) 129%

Sengling Serv 99%

Scott Highland Hts 139%

Second St David Inc 112%

Second St David 2 P 185

Simple Cdn 225

Snakeboard (5) 3%

Arcadian Int n/p (45) 1

Bodycote Int n/p 100%

INVERSCO n/p (220) 47

More Group n/p (600) 225

Regal Pps n/p (20) 14

Star n/p (100) 38

Vision Cn n/p (235) 38

Closing Prices Page S2

Cracks in the walls

AFTER six years of unchanged dividends, MEPC is probably heading for its seventh and investors might well wonder why they should wait for growth in 1998. The company had ready explanations for the underperformance. MEPC could not predict the takeover of Broadway, the anchor department store at Northridge by a competing chain and the resulting closure of the main draw to its California centre. Nevertheless, investors were previously unaware that Broadway owned its part of Northridge and the realisation that anchor tenants at MEPC's US shopping centres could, under special circumstances, quit the malls, is sobering.

Earthquakes, real and metaphorical at Northridge, have put a huge damper on MEPC's big play on realising in the US and the know-it-alls will nod sagely and repeat the

adage that America is a graveyard for British property developers. But excluding Northridge, America looks satisfactory with a 13 per cent total return. The return from Australia was only 6.7 per cent and the UK generated a mere 8.1 per cent.

There lies the nub of the problem. MEPC's average cost of capital is about 12 per cent, but, currently, the company's internal rate of return is clearly well below the threshold. On that measure MEPC is destroying, not creating value. Of course, the company is lumbered with dud properties from the past and new assets will yield better returns. MEPC is now targeting 12.5 per cent IRR. But the question for investors must be: is it worth the effort? A business which yields a return marginally ahead of its cost of investing has not much to recommend it.

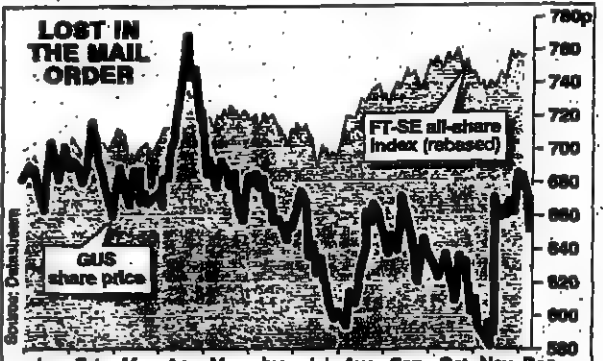
GUS

LORD WOLFSON of Sunningdale's feet were barely under the chairman's desk before he announced the £1.2 billion purchase of Experian, the data suppliers. The deal made GUS look dynamic and purposeful and gave many in the City the impression that his arrival at Great Universal Stores had instantly

wrong sort old-fashioned 1,000-page catalogues and agents earning commission and demanding incentives.

GUS, we were told, is now looking at various ways of moving into the more profitable and fast-growing market epitomised by Next Directory and Lands End. It is also looking at taking Freemans off Sears' hands.

The latter move would be essentially defensive — ensuring no one else got Freemans — and would be likely to attract a referral to the MMC. More effort spent on seeking the right way into the niche catalogue markets would be a far more productive use of time, and would make the most of GUS's still considerable cash resources.



GUS share price

Reed Elsevier

THE UKIND have always said that Reed Elsevier is better at acquiring companies than managing them. The Anglo-Dutch publisher yesterday gave substance to the allegation with an end-of-year trading statement that came close to a profits warning. It noted, among other things, that growth in electronic publishing was still insufficient to offset declines in hard-copy publishing, and that the performance of its European exhibitions business was underwhelming.

None of these factors on its own constitutes a crisis. But collectively, they left the uneasy feeling that Reed has taken its eye off the ball, analysts responded by trimming their forecasts.

Reed is good at buying. Lexis-News, the last big purchase, has reported steadily increasing profits and confirmed Reed's theory that its best prospects are in business-to-business electronic

publishing and the on-line market. But that was two years ago; Reed has made no significant acquisition since then, though rumours abound that it would like to acquire Computer Services.

Imperial Tobacco, the world's largest tobacco company, has risen accordingly. Reed may well have to bid its time before it makes another splashy deal. In the meantime, it should spend money on better managers.

Imperial

IMPERIAL TOBACCO left the Hanson group crowded with laurels. Initial trading pushed the tobacco company's stock higher — an almost forgotten experience for Hanson shareholders — and at one stage broke the 400p level which many analysts suggested was its natural value.

Since then the share price has lagged its early success — hit by the spread of American tobacco litigation to the UK.

Imperial faces 12 lawsuits, including one supported by lawyers working on a no win no fee basis. Imperial maintains it will come to nothing.

The addition of Callaghan to the senior management will help Imperial, which wants to be assessed on profits, not sentiment. But the battles with the health lobby are unlikely to diminish and these will always have a drag effect on the share price.

Imperial suffers from its heavy weighting to the UK where it needs to run fast just to keep its sales level. Yet, its relatively small international exposure — up to 19 per cent of profits from 15 per cent in 1995 — leaves room for growth.

The company hopes to make gains abroad, especially in the emerging markets. But for all the company's hard work, shareholders are still betting on an unlikely end to anti-tobacco puritanism.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

CRUDE OILS (Brent) 24.95 -0.25
Brent (Day) 24.95 -0.25
Brent (15 day) 24.95 -0.25
WTI Intermediate (Jan) 23.20 -0.20
WTI Intermediate (Feb) 24.70 -0.20

PRODUCTS (\$/MT)
Spot Feb New Europe (brent delivery)
Premium (Jan) 22.10 -0.10
Copper EEC 228.40 -2.20
15 Fuel Oil 123.10 -1.20
Naphtha 232.00 -2.00

WHEAT (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Barley (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Rice (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Soybean (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Corn (cwt) 14.00 -0.10

IRON ORE (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Copper (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Zinc (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Nickel (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Alumina (cwt) 14.00 -0.10

COCAINE 1000-1020
ROBUSTA COFFEE 1000-1020
Cocoa Beans 1000-1020
Coffee Beans 1000-1020
Rubber 1000-1020

MEAT & LIVESTOCK
COMMISSION
Pork 1000-1020
Beef 1000-1020
Lamb 1000-1020
Chicken 1000-1020
Turkey 1000-1020

WHEAT (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Barley (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Rice (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Soybean (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Corn (cwt) 14.00 -0.10

IRON ORE (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Copper (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Zinc (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Nickel (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
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COCAINE 1000-1020
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Nickel (cwt) 14.00 -0.10
Alumina (cwt) 14.00 -0.10

COCAINE 1000-1020
ROBUSTA COFFEE 1000-1020
Cocoa Beans 1000-1020
Coffee Beans 1000-1020
Rubber 1000-1020

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

FTSE 100
Previous open interest: 67,622
FTSE 250
Previous open interest: 5,510
Three Month Sterling
Previous open interest: 71,247

Three Mth Euro Yen
Previous open interest: 11,399
Long Gilt
Previous open interest: 10,400
Japanese Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 10,400

German Gov Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Three Month ECU
Previous open interest: 20,774
Euro Swiss Franc
Previous open interest: 20,774

Italian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Spanish Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Portuguese Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Argentine Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Brazilian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Chilean Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Colombian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Czech Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Danish Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

French Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Greek Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Hungarian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Indonesian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Irish Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Japanese Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Korean Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Luxembourg Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Malaysian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Mexican Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Netherlands Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
New Zealand Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Norwegian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Peruvian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Polish Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Portuguese Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Romanian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Russian Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

Singapore Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
South African Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774
Spanish Govt Bond
Previous open interest: 20,774

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency 7 day 1 month 3 month 6 month 12 month
Dollar 5.5 5.5 5.5 5.5 5.5
Euro 5.5 5.5 5.5 5.5 5.5
Sterling 5.5 5.5 5.5 5.5 5.5

Local Authority Depos
Sterling CDE
Dollar CDE
Building Society CDE

Prime Bank Rate (Dep)
Sterling Money Rate
Overnight: open 5%, close 5%

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Sterling CDE
Dollar CDE
Building Society CDE

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Local Authority Depos
Sterling CDE
Dollar CDE
Building Society CDE

Prime Bank Rate (Dep)
Sterling Money Rate
Overnight: open 5%, close 5%

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Bullion & Co)

Bullion: Open 599.15-599.40
Low 596.75-597.25
High 600.45-600.75
Close 597.00-597.25

Platinum 597.00-597.25
Silver 597.00-597.25
Palladium 597.00-597.25

Gold 597.00-597.25
Silver 597.00-597.25
Palladium 597.00-597.25

Gold 597.00-597.25
Silver 597.00-597.25
Palladium 597.00-597.25

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Silver 597.00-597.25
Palladium 597.00-597.25

Gold 597.00-597.25
Silver 597.00-597.25
Palladium 597.00-597.25

THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

Swipe me, an identity crisis

AN IDENTITY crisis has broken out at the Registrar of Friendly Societies since the organisation saw fit to invest in a second-hand batch of security swipe cards, purchased from foreign parts.

Employees have been spotted recently wandering around the fortress on Great Marlborough Street, wearing tags around their neck sporting the logo of the Royal Football Club of Hong Kong, among others. I am told that it is a cost-saving exercise, bearing in mind that the Registrar is moving in the middle of next month to Victory House, in Kingsway.

The official line: "It's taxpayers' money that we're saving."

£25 a brick

A SWEETENER for anyone unable to afford the seven-figure sum to have Sunderland Football Club's new stadium named after them. For a mere £25, soccer fans can have their name inscribed into one of the many bricks being used to build a "Wall of Fame" at the stadium. The Sunderland club's new home will cost £15 million to construct.

Ho, ho, ho

BARE-FACED Richard Branson took his revenge at Virgin's Christmas bash in the King's Road this week. Pinned to a chair in the middle of the party was Rowan Gormley, the former hirsute managing director of Virgin Direct. Armed with razors, his guests took it in turn to take both the beard and a little of the smile off Gormley's face. Having had the offending facial hair since the age of 17, the gold shave couldn't have been comfortable. Fortunately for Branson, who ended up coated in shaving cream, an obliging bottle blonde was by his side to wipe it clean away.



Rowan Gormley lost his beard at Branson's bash.

Socking it

SOCKS and aristocracy plan to make a powerful combination when Pex becomes London's first listed plc to quote its shares from next month on the new Euro market in Brussels. Pex, which is the largest manufacturer of children's socks and tights in the UK, is run by Andrea Cattaneo Della Volta, Marquess of Belforte, and a descendant of the tenth-century Doge of Genoa.

Warming

BEARING in mind the SFO's improving success rate, this year's Christmas card from the crime squad leaves me with a warm glow. It is illustrated with the score of "Silent Night" and decorated in holly and ribbons. A footnote on the back tells recipients: "This card supports the work of the Federation of Prisoners' Families Support Groups & NSPCC."

PETER Stringfellow has plumped for his old chum Sir Clive "CS" Sinclair to launch his nightclub on the Internet. In keeping with the festive season, old snakehips and Sir Clive will be accompanied by 75 "gorgeous angels".

MORAG PRESTON

Will a stability pact simply repeat the folly of Versailles?

German demands threaten to put a huge burden on the citizens of those countries in a single currency

There are times when unpleasant memories are worth reviving, even if they make our friends suspicious about our motives. Europe is approaching a fateful moment. The leaders of the European Union, meeting on Thursday at the Dublin summit, are entering the final stages of negotiation on Germany's demand for a "stability pact". This would punish countries that pursued economic policies deemed imprudent, according to the criteria laid out in the Maastricht treaty. If the 15 leaders reach an agreement on anything like the terms now being considered they will be setting Europe on a path that has been trodden in this century only once before.

There is one precedent for a multinational authority to reach over the heads of elected European countries and levy fines directly on their citizens for alleged national deficits. This precedent is the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which laid down a schedule of reparations to punish Germany for waging war against the rest of Europe. The "reparations question" dominated European diplomacy and economics throughout the inter-war years, as well as poisoning the internal politics of Germany and France. There are many opinions about whether reparations played a role in the rise of Hitler, in the hyper-inflation that destroyed the Weimar Republic, or in the great depression of the 1930s. But on one point virtually all historians are agreed: the French insistence that Germany must be punished by paying reparations was a big mistake.

The question now is whether Europe might soon commit another such historical mistake. Even to an economist it is hard to grasp the political significance of the tedious percentages and decimal points that comprise the stability pact proposal. Members of the single currency will be fined 0.2 per cent of GDP, plus 0.1 per cent of GDP for every point by which the deficit exceeds the Maastricht reference level of 3 per cent. The only way to make sense of such abstractions is to put the figures into some kind of historical context. This can be done by asking two concrete questions.

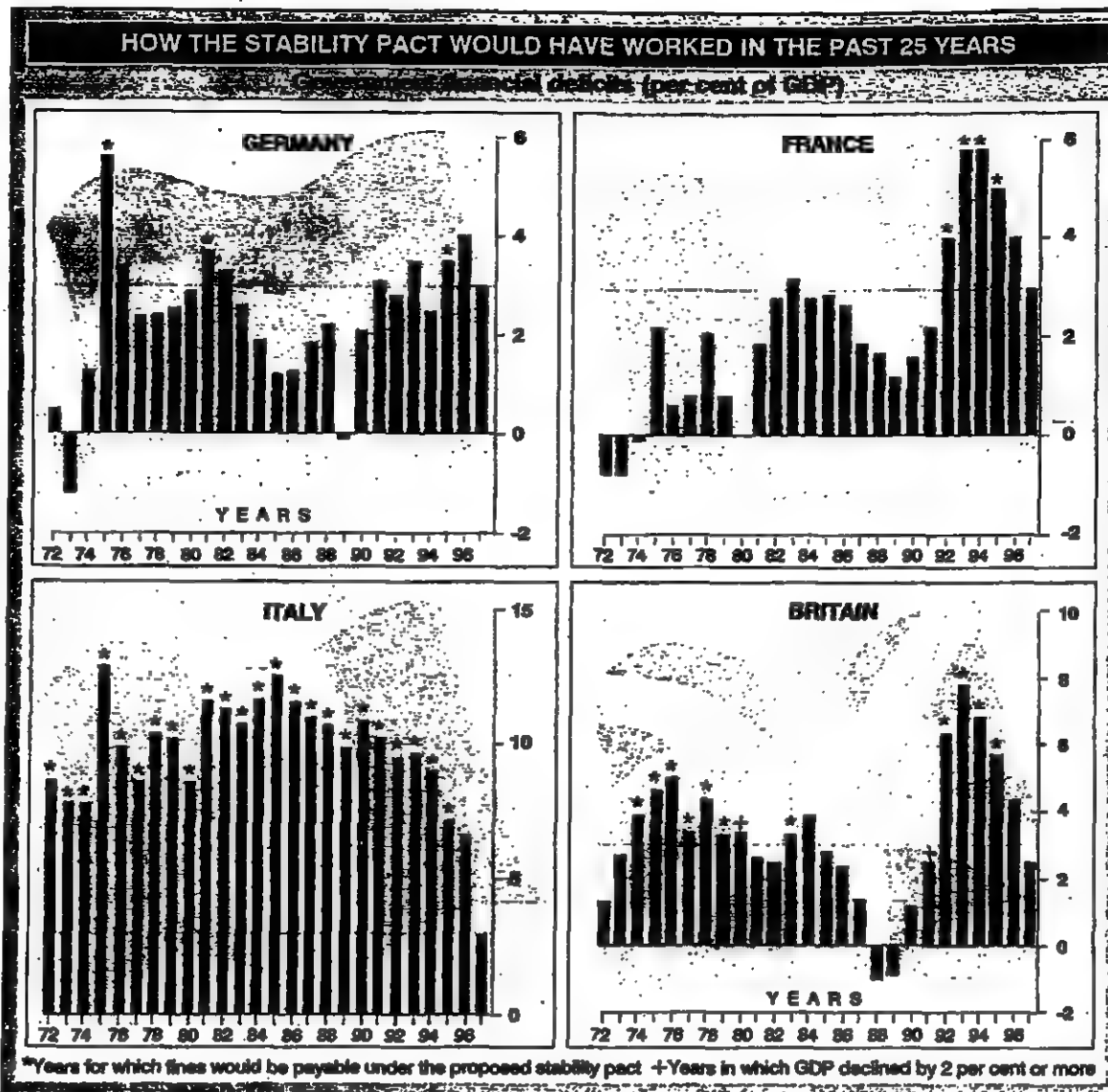
How much the main European countries would have paid in fines if the proposed stability pact had been in force over the past 25 years? And how would these potential exactions compare with the reparations paid by Germany after the First World War?

To answer the first question I applied the stability pact formula to the budgetary statistics for Germany, France, Italy and Britain from 1972 to 1996. It makes surprisingly little difference whether we apply the German version of the stability pact or the slightly "softer" version backed by other governments. Italy, for example, would have paid maximum fines every year since 1972 under the German formula. Under the "soft" formula it would have paid exactly the same fines in 24 out of the last 25 years.

The results of applying the "softer" formula to OECD figures for the past 25 years are illustrated in the charts. Germany would have been fined only once. The others would all have paid much larger fines: a cumulative 1.9 per cent of GDP for France; 4 per cent of GDP for Britain and 12 per cent of GDP for Italy. Converting these figures into dollars, the fines would have totalled \$25 billion for France, \$41 billion for Britain and \$122 billion for Italy.

Windfall tax and utility companies

From Mr Stephen L. Phillips Sir, Pennington (November 15) criticises the utility companies for distributing cash ahead of a possible new Labour windfall tax. But surely it is their elementary duty to put as much as possible of their shareholders' assets out of the way of



How do we compare these figures to German reparations? There are two issues: first, to establish how much Germany paid and, secondly, to convert this into present-day money. Germany's total payments are still a matter of dispute among historians, partly because some of the reparations were paid in kind (for example through the property expropriated during the French occupation of the Ruhr), and partly because German governments received large loans from America to help to make their payments. According to the Allied Reparations Commission, Germany's total payments were around 20 billion gold marks, or \$5 billion by

stability pact. But most of Germany's reparations payments were made with borrowed money, which the country never repaid. The stability pact, by contrast, would specifically prevent governments borrowing to pay their fines.

Taking this factor into account, the present-day value of Germany's 3 billion gold marks in net reparations payments would be only \$0.3 billion. That is roughly equivalent to the annual fines that France would have paid in each of the past three years.

Another way of adjusting for inflation, which takes some account of the fact that asset values have risen much faster than consumer prices, reflecting the general rise in productivity and world-wide wealth, is to consider the value of reparations in terms of gold. This was how they were originally set by the Allies. Germany's gross payments were between 20 and 30 billion gold marks, as mentioned above. A gold mark was defined as 6.146 grains of 900 fine gold, which meant that an ounce of pure gold was worth 78 gold marks. Germany's gross payments were equivalent, therefore, to between 256 and 461 million ounces of gold — worth \$95 billion to \$170 billion at today's gold price. Net reparations, after deducting foreign borrowings, were equivalent to 38 million ounces of gold, now worth \$14 billion.

In terms of gold, therefore, Germany's gross reparations were considerably higher than the potential penalties for France and Britain under the stability pact, but very close to Italy's £122 billion liabilities if it reverted to its historical economic performance (or, more accurately, if it continued the trends of the past 25 years).

However, the real burden of Germany's

resource transfers to the Allies was reflected in the net reparations, worth only \$14 billion in terms of gold. This was just half of the \$25 billion that France would have had to pay under the stability pact.

In sum, the stability pact, even in the more lenient form supported by non-German governments, threatens to put a huge burden on the citizens of France, Italy and other single-currency countries, a burden fully comparable with the one imposed on Germany by France after the First World War.

Apologists for monetary union will argue, of course, that history is irrelevant to the single currency's future performance. Governments that join EMU will make greater efforts to control their finances specifically to avoid the stability pact fines. This may happen. It may also be wishful thinking. Virtually all economists agree that controlling deficits is harder, not easier, in a single-currency zone: governments with no control over domestic interest rates or exchange rates have no way of compensating for shifts in demand. Indeed, it is no coincidence that all six of the years when France had an "excessive deficit" have occurred during the post-1987 period when the franc was tied to the mark. Britain, too, has suffered its biggest deficits during the ERM period and immediately afterwards. Simply to assume that the inherent instability of national budgets will be overcome by political "will" after 1999 is optimistic, to put it mildly. To risk reviving the mutual suspicions among the governments of Europe at each other's throats on the basis of such breezy assumptions borders on madness.

Britain has the right to veto the stability pact, even if it chooses to opt out of EMU. But will John Major have the courage to use this power? Or will he simply wash his hands and allow the others to carry on with their folly — just as Lloyd George did when the French insisted on the madness of reparations at Versailles?

It is optimistic to assume the inherent instability of national budgets will be overcome by political will

Where did we engineers go wrong in figuring out the worth of our widgets?

From the President of the Institution of Structural Engineers

Sir, The engaging charm with which Nick Land, senior partner of Ernst & Young, explained away the average salaries of his 412 partners over the past four or five years — £200,000 per annum and rising — is to be admired.

I also accept that by comparison with at least one of his contemporaries in another major accounting firm his own salary of £425,000 plus is definitely "pauperish" — at that rate he will never, as he says, become a multi-million-

aire. Good Luck to them all, I say. If clients will pay the fees and perceive value for their money, then accountants, lawyers and similar professions should be paid these rewards for their efforts in safeguarding client wealth and in keeping their clear of the law.

But the real sting was for me in the tail of your article (Business News, December 4), when Nick so honestly admitted that "I'd rather have made widgets. I could definitely have been running some miserable factory somewhere" — and a good job you'd have made of it too, Nick! They

would almost certainly have been good widgets and I'm sure the factory would have been at least a little less miserable for your presence.

Of course, Nick and his fellow directors would have almost certainly had a higher director/employee ratio to deal with (Ernst & Young 1:16, industry 1:60) and salaries would have been less (average chartered engineer about £35,000), but it would have been "jolly good fun", while actually creating the wealth that industry provides to keep all those accountants employed. Nick, where did all we

engineers go wrong by believing that what we made and constructed for the benefit of society at large would be valued? Or have I again confused value and worth with remuneration?

Anyway, enough of this: back to the lathes and mixers or there'll be no widgets — then there really will be hell to pay. What will our accountants say? Yours faithfully, BRIAN CLANCY, President, Institute of Structural Engineers, 11 Upper Belgrave Street, SW1.

Suitable for the Goldfish Club

From Mr George May Sir, No doubt Annabel Geddes's gardener "surviving on social security benefits" would appreciate the odd crust from the Manor table. He may even have other sources from which a society could be derived.

My own part-time gardener (hard-working and much admired) had been with me for several months before announcing that we shared the same broker. This he had gleaned from a discarded envelope. He would certainly be suitable for the Goldfish Club.

The gasman may not be the piper, but may well know who can pay.

Yours faithfully, GEORGE MAY, Strathgry, 63 Welbeck Road, Bolsover, Derbyshire.

Letters to The Times Business section can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

Cash is king in today's gas market

Carl Mortished looks beyond the deal struck on "take-or-pay" contracts

When the price of a commodity is low, the strongest player is the one with deep pockets. Sadly for British Gas (BG), the counterparty in its negotiations over the notorious "take-or-pay" contracts are big cash-rich oil companies.

Unlike BG, they are not worried about paying dividends or finding the funds to invest in new projects. Companies such as Shell and BP have plenty of money because of high oil prices and lower costs. BG was trumpeting the deal with BP yesterday as an excellent investment, but remained coy about the details. It has spent a year chasing a group of suppliers waving valid contracts, all of which are different in price, volume and timescale.

Yesterday, Richard Giordano, chairman of BG, suggested that the deal over 16 billion thermes of gas might be a benchmark. It will be lucky if it proves to be so. BG admitted yesterday that, together, the BP and its own internal contracts represented only 10 per cent of the total. To recap, BG's take-or-pay problem stems from three factors: the dash for North Sea

balance, but only a little. BP took about 1.8 billion thermes of unwanted gas back from the utility. That will not be a headache for the oil company, the spot price after the recent cold weather has been running at 20p per therm. BP is one of BG's cheaper suppliers and the gas utility is paying £293 billion to reduce the price a therm by about 2p to 14p.

Net of tax the cost to BG is about £200 million, which suggests that resolving the total problem might cost £2 billion. Moreover, were BG to reduce all its expensive contracts (those at 20p per therm or more) the utility would be facing a cost nearer £3 billion.

But in the smoke-filled rooms where BG thrashes out such deals, the devil is in the detail. Shell, BP and Esso have no reason to skin this particular cat to the bone. It is, after all, their biggest customer. They are playing a much longer game, one that looks beyond Britain to the Continent.

In a few years, gas will be flowing through the inter-

connector to The Netherlands and Germany, where prices are much higher and the oil companies desperately want

to secure market share. They will also be keenly aware that prices go up as well as down and that the UK's gas bubble will soon deflate. If it does not burst.

To seize the opportunities, the oil majors need ample supplies of cheap gas to sell. Therefore future deals will focus on Morecambe Bay, Britain's biggest gasfield, owned by Centrica, the renamed trading company. With £8 billion in the bank, Shell is unlikely to want cash, but with an eye to the future might like a piece of Morecambe Bay, a key part of the UK gas jigsaw puzzle. Morecambe operates as a "swing producer" ironing out peaks of gas demand and, therefore, has strategic importance to the gas market in Britain.

Even BP, which yesterday was waving an IOU worth £293 million, could become a buyer. Due to be paid next year, a cash-strapped Centrica might be willing to swap a promise to pay for assets underground. In today's gas market, cash is definitely king.



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TM6/1996

AAT

Windfall for directors after Gradus takeover



Symonds: founder of Gradus

By KERRI RODGERS

TWO directors of Gradus Group, the flooring accessories and carpet company, stand to make almost £20 million in cash and shares after a £32.9 million agreed takeover by Headlam, the acquisitive floorcoverings and fabrics distributor.

Headlam's offer values each Gradus share at 164p, compared with Wednesday's closing price of 125½p.

Gradus, which reported disappointing results for the first six months of the year, has seen its share price stay relatively flat since

it floated at 122p in June 1995. Ken Symonds, 68, who founded Gradus with a £100 investment 30 years ago, stands to receive £5 million in cash and £10 million Headlam shares from the deal.

Lewis McDermott, who teamed up with Mr Symonds in 1986, will receive about £4.6 million for his stake, a third of it in cash. The two directors control almost 60 per cent of the share capital and have given binding undertakings to accept the offer, effectively ruling out intervention by a third party.

Headlam, which has made two Dutch and two UK acquisitions this year, said that the takeover would

enable it to make a strong push into the contract carpets market, where it has only a small presence. It also gains control of Gradus's larger flooring accessories division.

The company said that the acquisition would immediately enhance earnings. Its gearing is expected to increase to 43 per cent.

The move was broadly well received, although one analyst expressed some disappointment that the core strategic factor in the takeover, the contract carpets division, represented only a third of the total business.

Headlam is offering 39 new shares and £55.21 in cash, with a loan note

alternative, for every 100 Gradus shares. Gradus shareholders will also receive a second interim dividend for the year to December 31 of 4p per share, payable on January 6, 1997, making a total dividend of 5.8p per share (5.4p).

In a trading statement, Headlam said that it had enjoyed record trading levels during the second half and intended to recommend a final 1996 dividend of 4.35p per share, making a 21 per cent increase in the total dividend to 5.8p.

Mr McDermott, Mr Symonds and a third director sold more than three million shares, worth nearly £4 million, when Gradus was floated.

GUS eyes Freemans but fears a referral

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LORD WOLFSON of Sunningdale confirmed yesterday that Great Universal Stores, the giant mail order group that he chairs, is interested in buying the Freemans catalogue business, but he fears a bid would run into monopoly objections.

Lord Wolfson, who was speaking as he revealed GUS's first decline in profits in 48 years, also said that his long-term plan is to move the group, best known for its "big book" catalogues such as Kays, into the fast-growing niche catalogue business.

GUS's control of about one third of the UK mail order business would be "a handicap" if it decided to bid for Freemans, he said, but he did not rule out making a move. "Clearly GUS would have to say it is interested in buying another mail order company in the UK because we believe the market is going to consolidate," he said. "There won't be eight major big-book players in eight years' time."

Sears said earlier this week that it is discussing the sale of Freemans with various companies. There are believed to include Littlewoods, N Brown and Germany's Otto Versand, as well as GUS.

If a bid from GUS were referred, the company would have to persuade the Office of Fair Trading to look at its share of the whole UK retail market, or the European mail order market, rather than the UK mail order market alone, Lord Wolfson said.

Lord Wolfson, who is also chairman of Next, took over at GUS from his cousin, Lord Wolfson of Marylebone, in the

autumn. Delivering his first set of results for the group yesterday, he unveiled a 1 per cent drop in pre-tax profits, to £235.6 million, in the six months to September 30. The figures were hit by the weakness of the South African rand against sterling, and a decline in UK home shopping sales.

He said that trade "continues to be difficult in the home shopping division", while the strength of sterling will have "a significant effect on the translation of the results of the overseas subsidiaries, particularly South Africa and Holland".

This gloomy outlook sent GUS's shares down 2½p, to 654½p. The £1.2 billion acquisition last month of Experian, the American information services business, should bolster group profits in the second half.

Lord Wolfson added that he wants to expand GUS's direct mail order business either through an acquisition, franchising of an established high street brand, or developing its own "aspirational" direct mail brand — along the lines of Lands' End or LL Bean — from scratch. The recruitment of agents — the people who pass on orders to the company for a fee and who form the backbone of the traditional "big-book" business — has been slowed and the size of the average order has since risen, he said.

Earnings per share slipped from 15.7p to 15.5p, but the interim dividend was raised 10 per cent, to 5.5p. It will be paid on March 27.

Tempos, page 29



John Dawson, right, with Colin Ainger, the finance director, saw Expro's profits rise 34 per cent in the first half

Forward warns again after disaster in US

By FRASER NELSON

A DISASTROUS attempt to make use of spare capacity in the US has prompted a second profits warning in three months from Forward Technology Industries, the troubled electronics and audio company.

Forward switched over its American factory to making more complex machinery for other companies, but found it was unable to meet their requirements. Yesterday's warning prompted a 31 per cent fall in Forward's market value.

The company, which in October gave warning that profits would be down, said it was now on course to go into

the red after even more costs from its 15 loss-making contracts in the US. Its shares, which have already nosedived from 100p to 39p over the past nine months, fell to a two-year low of 26½p yesterday, before closing at 27½p, down 11½p.

Kenneth Cobley, chief executive, said the US failure had been compounded, with sluggish pre-Christmas sales for its Sound and Vision arm, but indicated that the damage would be limited to a small loss for the current financial year.

Analysts now expect Forward to make a pre-tax loss of £400,000 for the year to December 31 — its first time in

the red for five years — with a return to profit in 1997. Forward said it has not taken on any more work for other companies since August and expects the last of its loss-making contracts to be completed by January.

Mr Cobley said that problems came after the company took on plastic-bonding orders for external firms to escape the pressures of its existing market. He added: "On the face of it, it seemed a good opportunity for us, but we got our fingers burnt. We will now be returning to where we were 18 months ago, when we were involved in no one's business but our own."

Expro sees robust oil industry

By MARTIN BARROW

EXPRO International Group, the oilfield services company, enjoyed a 34 per cent rise in first-half profits and said the oil industry was in robust health despite the uncertain outlook for the price of crude.

In the six months to September 30, the company, which came to market last year, lifted profits to £8.04 million from £6 million. Expro reported strong progress in all regions, including America, where operations were established in mid-1995. Earnings improved to 9.5p a share from 7.5p previously. The interim dividend is increased 15 per cent to 2.65p a share and will be paid on January 30.

John Dawson, chief executive, said: "The oil industry is in a state of good health, having got to grips with low oil prices over the last five years through downsizing, enhanced technologies and outsourcing. In spite of current improvements in the oil price, our customers' long-term investment decisions assume flat commodity prices; also, they continue to prioritise environmental issues."

Turnover advanced 34 per cent to £49.8 million. The North Sea accounted for turnover of £22.1 million, with strong demand for sub-sea and testing services. Two extended well tests were conducted for Ranger Oil and Norsk Hydro.

Turnover in continental Europe was £10.4 million, while Africa and the former Soviet Union accounted for £9.8 million. Expro also undertook work in the Asia Pacific region.

Expro shares fell 2p to 450p. The shares were issued at 175p in March 1995.

Telstra sell-off given go-ahead

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

THE proposed A\$8 billion (£3.9 billion) privatisation of Telstra, Australia's telecommunications company, finally got the go-ahead yesterday after the coalition government narrowly secured parliamentary approval for the sale.

The vote, which was won by 35 votes to 33, is a key victory for the Government, which had been battling for months to gain the support of two independent MPs who held the balance of power.

The planned sale of a third of Telstra will be the largest public flotation in Australia's history and almost double the size of the Commonwealth Bank float that took place earlier this year.

The sale is the centrepiece of the Government's budget plans and is scheduled to get

under way next year. The Government's tactics to secure approval for the sale were condemned by the Opposition, which described its moves as pork-barrel vote buying.

In return for the backing of the independent MPs, the Government yesterday agreed to increase its proposed A\$1 billion environment programme by A\$100 million and to set up a A\$250 million fund to improve job opportunities in rural areas.

Telstra paved the way for the sale earlier this year with a 9 per cent rise in full-year pre-tax profits to A\$2.3 billion and confirmation that it planned to axe 22,000 jobs over the next three years.

Analysts have said that the possibility of industrial action could undermine the float.

Courts aiming to split shares

SHARES in Courts rose 15 per cent to a record high yesterday after the furniture retailer unveiled better than expected interim results and said it planned to split its shares (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Courts proposed a five-for-two split of its shares, which rose 185p, to £11.60, on the grounds that the price is high relative to most listed companies, inhibiting liquidity.

Pre-tax profits, excluding an exceptional credit of £4.8 million for last year, rose 142 per cent, to £9.6 million, in the half year to September 29. Sales rose 31.5 per cent, to £180 million. The interim dividend, due on April 11, rises 0.4p to 2.5p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Alvis steady despite fewer deliveries

PRE-TAX profits at Alvis, the manufacturer of specialist vehicles and equipment for the defence and aerospace sector, were little changed at £8.9 million in the year to September 30, compared with £8.7 million previously. The company blamed a lower rate of armoured vehicle deliveries at Alvis Transmissions. Turnover fell to £90.4 million from £101.4 million and operating profits were reduced to £4.93 million from £6.3 million.

However, profits at the pre-tax level were helped by an improved contribution from Avinto, an associated company, and higher interest receipts. Earnings were 10.1p a share (10p last time) and the total dividend is increased to 3p a share from 2p, with a 2p final (1.25p). Alvis ended the year with net cash of £26.8 million. Nick Prest, chairman, said the company's strong order book and balance sheet provided a good platform from which to go forward.

Exports boost Denby

GROWTH of 60 per cent in exports spurred Denby Group, the Derbyshire pottery maker, to a record pre-tax profit of £6.1 million, up 28 per cent, in the year to September 30. Earnings per share rose by 27 per cent, to 12.2p, and the final dividend rises from 2.3p to 2.7p, due on January 15, giving a full-year dividend up by 17 per cent, to 4.05p. The company said that sterling's recent strengthening was "an issue" and that it is "taking appropriate measures to limit the impact".

Abbeystown glitters

ABBEYSTOWN, the gold and silver jewellery manufacturer, rose to £188,000 from £90,000 in the six months to August 31. Earnings rose to 0.5p a share from 0.3p, while £25.4 million turnover compared with £22.7 million. Abbeystown will pay an interim dividend of 1.3p (1.2p) on January 17. Michael Lever, chairman, said he was pleased with the company's further profitable growth, with the six-month period being one of positive change and development.

Hornby back on track

PRE-TAX profits at Hornby Group, the model railway and toy manufacturer, recovered to £1.1 million from £272,000 in the six months to September 30 despite a decline in turnover to £13.1 million from £13.7 million. The interim dividend of 2p (nil) will be paid on January 30. Peter Newey, chairman, said a change in the mix of products sold led to the improved profit. He said a new operational management team was appointed in September to improve production efficiency and reduce production costs.

Stake for Bardon

BARDON GROUP, the international quarrying and aggregates group, is poised for an investment in Bruncliffe Aggregates, although a full bid is ruled out. Bardon has taken an option, expiring on January 3, to acquire 8 million Bruncliffe ordinary shares — representing almost 15 per cent of the share capital — and measured loan stock convertible into 5.05 per cent of the enlarged share capital. The purchase will be satisfied in £3.1 million of new Bardon shares.

Norbain expansion plan

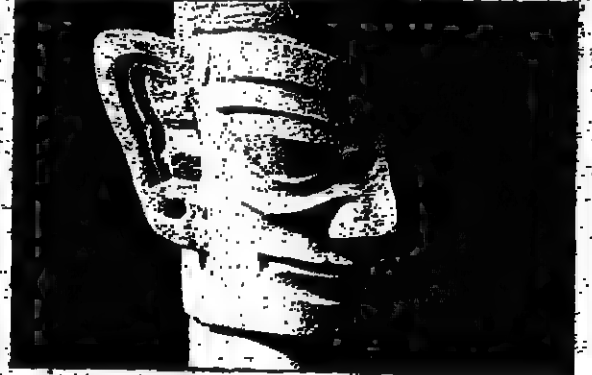
NORBAIN, the distributor of closed circuit television equipment, is targeting acquisitions in continental Europe as it lays plans for further expansion. The company, which also supplies alarm products, reported an 18 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £2 million for the six months to October 31, with turnover rising 34 per cent to £43 million. The interim dividend is lifted 20 per cent to 3p a share, payable from earnings that rose 18 per cent to 12.49p a share.

Syltone pulls ahead

SYLTONE, the transport engineering group, said strong demand in the Far East helped to offset weak markets in Europe and North America in the six months to September 30. Sales declined in southern Spain but rose in northern Europe. The company achieved a 46 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £2.6 million on turnover that rose 54 per cent to £39.4 million. The interim dividend is increased 11 per cent to 2p a share, payable out of earnings that rose 13.6 per cent to 6.69p.

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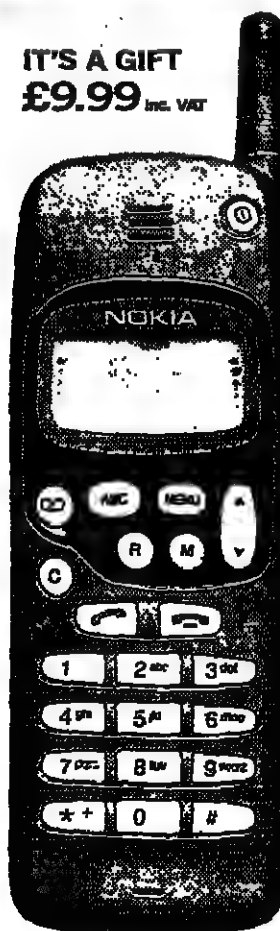
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Logica acquires French business for £18m

By FRASER NELSON

LOGICA, the computer services group, has taken its largest step so far in creating a pan-European network through buying a major French software consultancy for £18.4 million.

Axime Ingenierie, which employs 1,000 staff across France, Belgium and Luxembourg, will become Logica's largest overseas subsidiary, adding sales of £41.1 million a year.

Axime made a loss of £60,000 in its last financial year, but Logica said that its value was enhanced by its contacts with blue-chip clients across France, providing vital links with European business.

Martin Read, Logica's chief executive, accepted that the French economy was in poor health, but said that Axime was ideally positioned for the predicted surge in spending on computer systems by European businesses.

He said: "France has been a serious gap in Logica's worldwide map. Axime's customers include lots of big names in France who are the very people we want to do business with."

If France subscribes to a single currency, he said, it will trigger demand for new software systems from banks and insurance companies, which account for 40 per cent of Axime's business. Over the next three years, the computer consultancy market is also expected to gain from demand from companies updating their computers to cope with dates beyond the year 2000.

The deal is being funded from Logica's cash pile, and through limited borrowings. Mr Read said that the company's gearing was still very low, leaving it capable of making more buys in continental Europe.

Logica shares closed yesterday at a new high of 899p, up 27p.

Axime is to be renamed Logica SA, but its headquarters will remain in Paris, and there will be no job losses.

After the acquisition, Logica's worldwide staff will rise to 4,800, across 20 countries.



Martin Read, left, and Andrew Given, finance director, are developing a pan-European network for Logica by buying a French software consultancy

City trims forecasts as Reed warns of lower group profits

By ERIC REGULY

THE City scaled back its earnings forecasts for Reed Elsevier after the publishing group revealed tough trading conditions in several of its businesses. The shares of Reed International of Britain, which jointly owns the company with Elsevier of The Netherlands, fell 64p, to £10.87.

In an end-of-year trading statement, Reed said the businesses overall "are maintain-

ing good organic growth" and that it remains "confident about the outlook for the year". But it cited several factors that, taken together, suggested group profits in 1997 would come in below some analysts' forecasts.

Nigel Stapleton, Reed's co-chairman, said that the exhibition business in Europe, particularly in France, has been "softening", although growth is strong in the American and Asian markets.

Europe, however, accounts for less than one third of the division's business.

In the travel group, he noted that growth in electronic publications was still not high enough to offset the decline in revenue from their hard-copy counterparts. Reed does not expect growth in electronic publications to offset hard-copy declines until 1999 at the earliest. Mr Stapleton said that a £30 million investment programme is under way and

is "designed to position the business in an online environment and to reverse the current revenue trends".

Finally, Reed noted that the recent rise in the value of sterling is not working in its favour. It said that about half of its profits are earned in dollars and Dutch guilders and that 1997 profits would be hurt by some 4 per cent if exchange rates for these currencies remain at current levels. The rise of sterling in the

second half of this year has already reversed a 2 per cent currency translation gain in the first half.

The City consensus was that Reed would report pre-tax profits ranging from £920 million to £930 million next year. Salomon Brothers, the Wall Street securities house, now expects earnings of £870 million to £880 million.

Reed made no comment about its acquisition strategy. The company has said that it intends to make a multi-billion-dollar purchase in North America using the cash pile it has built from the sale of its consumer businesses. Reed made no significant acquisition this year and is expected to make a move in 1997.

Mr Stapleton would not comment on speculation that Reed would like to buy some or all of Bloomberg, the privately held financial information group in America that competes with Reuters.

Tempos, page 28

Ransomes cuts its way to a record

By FRASER NELSON

VALUABLE contracts from St Andrews and Gleneagles golf courses prompted strong follow-up for Ransomes, the lawnmower company, which returned record results in the year to September 30. The growth of golf courses across Europe stoked demand

for its custom-made lawnmowers, as its commercial division saw profits grow by 8 per cent, to £20.8 million.

But profits fell in its property and consumer divisions, leaving overall sales flat at £186 million. The £37 million raised in a rights issue in January helped to cut borrowings from £66.6 million to

£51.8 million, to leave pre-tax profits of £12.8 million (£9.2 million).

The company blamed a late and severe winter for the slump at its consumer division, whose profits fell from £483,000 to £100,000. The situation had been exacerbated by a general slump of 20 per cent across the home-use

lawnmower market, it added. Sales to park authorities in France and Germany were hit by a cut in spending, but Ransomes said its share of the market was maintained.

Earnings grew to 4.3p per share (3.1p). A resumed fine dividend of 0.75p brings the year total to 1.25p, payable on February 3.

NIE advances 9% at halfway

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

NORTHERN Ireland Electricity (NIE), whose price structures are being reviewed by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, yesterday reported a 9 per cent increase in interim pre-tax profits to £52 million.

David Jeffries, chairman, used the opportunity to reiterate NIE's argument that it can not deliver similar tariffs to other British companies because it does not have "the benefits of economy of scale and diversification of generation source".

In August NIE referred Ofgas's first review of its prices to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Its re-



Patrick Heran is raising the interim from profits of £52m

port is now due on March 17. The regulator had ordered NIE to cut its revenue by 31 per cent next year and to cap price rises over the following

four years to two percentage points below inflation. NIE responded by offering a once-off revenue reduction of 22 per cent next year, to be followed

by a price cap of three percentage points below inflation. After a series of bitter exchanges, the matter was referred to the MMC.

Yesterday NIE, where Patrick Heran is chief executive, said turnover in the six months to September 30 was up 11 per cent to £236 million. Earnings per share rose to 28.7p from 24.3p and the company declared a 10 per cent increase in the interim dividend to 5.5p, payable on March 27.

Mr Jeffries said the results reflected Northern Ireland's buoyant economy and insisted that although MMC recommendations would impact on income, recent efficiency and quality measures would benefit shareholders and customers.

Greencore earnings up by 16%

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

GREENCORE, the sugar, milling and malting group based in the Republic of Ireland, yesterday reported a stronger-than-expected rise in annual pre-tax profits, citing improved sales across the full spread of its businesses. Earnings before tax rose by 16 per cent, to Ir£54.6 million, the company said.

David Diller, chief executive, said that the high production rates of the current sugar-processing campaign and the recent strengthening of sterling against the Irish pound augured well for the future. Greencore's sugar division remains its star performer, with operating profits of Ir£27 million in the year to September. Sales were up 5 per cent, largely because of increased exports.

Greencore's growing list of associate companies, which includes Kears, the UK bakery, contributed just over Ir£5 million to the final profits tally. Earnings rose 10 per cent, to Ir£25.3p a share. The company declared a 17 per cent increase, to Ir£4.5p, in the final dividend, giving a total for the year of Ir£6.8p (Ir£5.9p), payable on February 17.

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MANCHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL

Kier flotation gives shares bonanza to employees

By KEITH RODGERS

ABOUT 900 employee shareholders in Kier Group, the construction company bought out from Hanson in 1992, will see the average value of their original investment soar from £4,500 to £50,000 when the company floats on Thursday.

NatWest Markets released Kier's listing document yesterday, with a placing price of 170p per share. That values the company at £53.8 million.

The company plans to raise £2.7 million by issuing 1.6 million new shares, which will be used mainly to redeem preference shares held by Hill Samuel Bank. Assuming the offer is fully taken up, employees will own 81 per cent of the company and Electra Fleming will hold 9.8 per cent.

Colin Busby, Kier's chairman and chief executive, said only 4 per cent of the total employee holding was being sold in the placing, realising £23.3 million. The directors, who will own 6.8 per cent of the enlarged share capital, are not selling any of their holding.

Mr Busby said the company was coming to market to redeem preference shares and unlock part of the employee shareholding. It has no immediate expansion plans for acquisitions, but felt the time was right to float.

Kier said the opening months of the current year, from July, had seen an increase in turnover in its construction and homes and property divisions.

Pre-tax profits have risen steadily over the past four years, from £5.6 million in the year to June 30, 1993, to £7.3 million in 1996. Turnover in the same period increased from £512.2 million to £614.6 million. The placing price represents a multiple of 11 times historic earnings.

Mr Busby said the company's non-executive directors had recommended against splitting its joint role. However, he indicated that the option was being kept open.

Directors and other shareholders controlling about 50 per cent of the share capital

have undertaken not to dispose of their shares without NatWest's consent before the announcement of the full-year results to June 1997 and to sell no more than 20 per cent the next year. Electra Fleming has also undertaken, with certain conditions, to retain its own holding at least until October 31, 1997.

Hill Samuel stands to realise more than £2 million from the sale of shares and the redemption of preferences.

Chrysler buyback fund \$2bn

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

CHRYSLER, the American auto manufacturer, yesterday increased its share buyback programme for 1997 to \$2 billion, from \$1 billion, and said it will increase the annual dividend to \$1.60 a share from \$1.40.

The company's share buyback programme now totals \$5 billion since it was started in 1995. Chrysler has repurchased 108 million shares and had 714 million shares outstanding at the end of the third quarter.

With the \$2 billion share buyback programme for 1996 completed, the board has authorised an immediate start to the 1997 programme, subject to market conditions. Robert Eaton, chairman, said: "The board are positive about the company's prospects and believe that, based on the current economic outlook, the increased dividend is sustainable and the buyback can be accomplished while the company continues to fund its aggressive product and marketing programmes."

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EDUCATION

Driven to the wall by league tables

Graham Lacey gives warning of a dangerous trend which could threaten the existence of the independents

Politicians and pundits have been predicting the collapse of independent schools since the end of the last war, if not before. Thirty years on, with a Labour Party red in tooth and claw (when it was in opposition, at least) they perhaps had good reason to believe it.

Since then, independent schools have gone from strength to strength. From the demise of grant-maintained schools to Thatcher's social revolution, which enfranchised a new generation of school fee-payers, they have flourished. Now, however, with no obvious threat, I believe they are in danger of being caught off-guard.

Independent schools have traditionally forged their identity from being "different", not only from the state sector but within themselves. Thus they have offered a genuine choice to parents. Now there appears to be an unstoppable trend, driven largely by market forces, towards a homogeneity that threatens to undermine the independent schools' most compelling justification to exist.

There has been a steady development towards the removal of variety and choice within the sector. The sternest critics of single-sex or boarding schools would surely not dispute that the opportunity should at least be there for parents to choose between them and co-educational and/or day schools. The choice is becoming more restricted every year.

But it has been the emphasis and priority given to academic results which has most eroded distinctions within the sector. While independent schools will continue to justify their existence on the ground that they set high academic standards, they have come up against the problem that this may not correspond, and perhaps even may conflict, with the priority they must now give to ensure a high position in the league tables.

The national obsession with exam results is doubly unfortunate for independent schools, for it has been responsible not only for removing the differences between them, but also between independent schools as a whole and their

rivals in the state system. The horns of the two sectors are locked and the battle is being fought for the same prize. There is no guarantee that independent schools will emerge victorious.

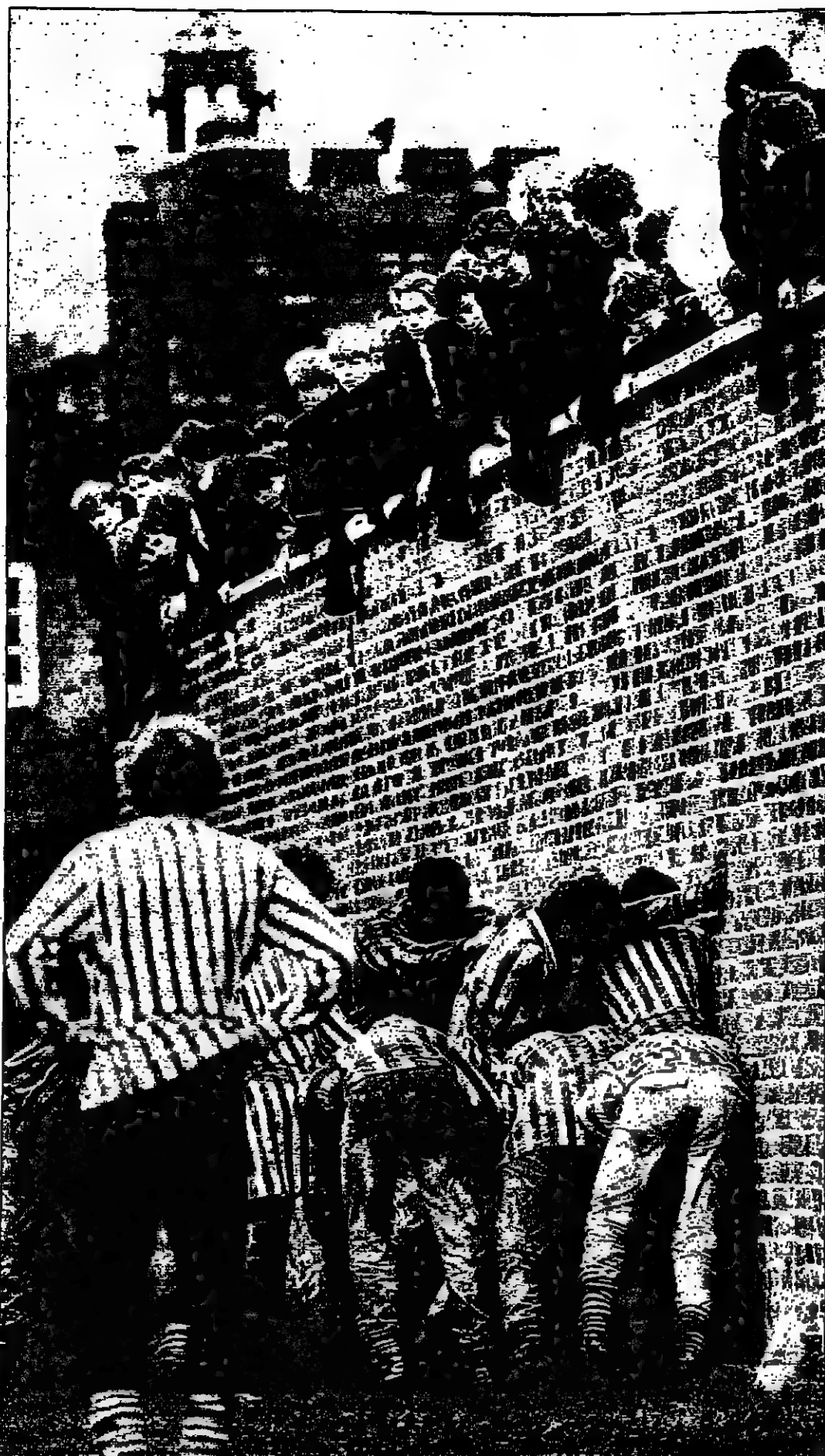
A glance at the notorious league tables would seem to confirm this. Independent schools' domination of the top positions has, at least until recently, been maintained because they have had more resources to achieve good exam results, but also because they have been able to be more selective in their intake. While the first advantage may still hold, the second has been undermined by the pressing need to fill places at any price.

Conversely, selection has come back into fashion in the state sector, and its adoption does not appear to be confined to the Conservative Party. The emergence of the GMS has not only accentuated the problem of recruitment for independent schools but seriously challenged the assumption that they offer the best education, if quality continues to be measured by league table position. The recent success of the new state sector elite in breaking into the "premier league" has forced a reappraisal of the old assumption that independent schools, almost by definition, offer the best education.

The next generation of parents will be asking: "Why spend £10,000 a year on school fees when a similar education can be experienced at the local grammar for nothing?"

The problem for independent schools is that they have, until recently, built their *raison d'être*, at least in part, on values that no league table, "value-added" or not "value-added", can assess. How does one measure *esprit de corps*, or self-reliance, or the value of a "rounded education" that provides the opportunity for an individual's potential to be tapped — a potential which may be displayed in the school concert hall or on the sports field as much as, or even instead of, in the classroom?

Such an education is being sacrificed on the "league table" altar. One does not have to work in



The Eton Wall Game may build *esprit de corps* — but such values are not recorded in league tables

the independent sector to know that extracurricular activities no longer have the place they used to, especially if they have to grind to a halt for most of the summer term to give way to the sitting of exams.

If the independent schools' future is to be secured they will have to sacrifice their market's short-term demands for a longer-term strategy for survival. This might involve a redefining of their identity and the

use of their extra resources to offer, once more, something distinctively different, in process and product, from their rivals in the state sector. In the long term the market, fickle though it is, may start to look for an alternative dist to the *blancmange* served up by the vast majority.

The great educational changes of the past 200 years were not introduced on the basis of "customer demand". How many young

sters, for example, wanted to go to school when an Act of 1880 made attendance compulsory? Yet who now would advocate its repeal? For the security of their own future as much as for the cause of education, it is time for independent schools similarly to buck the market and put education above economics and principle above popularity.

Graham Lacey is head of careers at Sevenoaks School, Kent.

Bold new world where students' needs come first

Tony Evans argues against the evils of uniformity in mass university education

The university world is undergoing seismic change which may not prove to the advantage of students. There are grounds for observing this with suspicion, as you might a pudding you're not sure you ordered.

A system that once channelled only a few through university gates and wastefully spurned the talents of so many has become one of mass university education. Where 7 per cent entered in 1960, and some 14 per cent in 1980, a third will enter between now and the millennium. That, in developing the nation's potential, is entirely laudable — provided consequences have been considered and calculated for students and for the status of the university sector.

Few deny that spreading the benefits of a university experience across the population is positive, or that a nation is enriched by those who continue their education. You do not have to agree with Alan Coren that a university is not a university unless you can climb it with a chamberpot. But is it wise for mass university education to be synonymous with uniformity?

Must the pressures of such expansion cause the demise of the most brilliant? To nurture the quality and safeguard the provision of the most demanding courses for those who need such intellectual rigour must be a priority. Marathons are a mass-entry business, yet elite athletes have their unshared, privileged place in them.

You may expect the Provost of University College London to represent the need for an Ivy League. "Unless," he writes, "we have more selectivity we won't have any university able to compete with the University of Chicago or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology." When France expanded its university sector, did the status of its *Grandes Ecoles* suffer?

Already there is an unofficial Premier League of British universities, and it is no doubt available for any hotel chain's sponsorship. This has developed with scant regard to the quality of student life, the quality of teaching and accommodation, the adequacy of grants, the spiralling dropout rates, the conditions of work in libraries and laboratories, the threatened necessity for fees, the inevitability of students' part-time jobs, the comparability and value of degrees.

Universities' reputations can wax and wane and departments' strengths all the more so in the universities' new academic trans-

fer market. How are pupils to know where is most appropriate? How are their teachers to advise? And is there not a similar lottery in the matter of admissions?

For a variety of reasons the time has come to adopt a process of post-qualification admissions, as the association of every school and college has urged. Of course, such a systemic change would require compromise and adjustment by schools, examination boards and universities. But, in greater justice, economy and personal care, the benefits to the students — those whom the system purports to serve — far outweigh all other imperatives and vested interests.

There are other questions which must be boldly addressed and not left for coincidence to solve. Shall we move still further, on grounds of growing financial necessity, into attendance at the local university? What are the consequences which cultural shift might imply? Are we moving, through unplanned devaluation of the first degree, into the culture of the indispensable Master's degree? Are we to embark irreversibly on a voyage of socially isolated computer-learning? How will that correct our reputedly national weaknesses in communication, team work and oral presentation? Will the answer to the lamented paucity of top-class engineers, scientists, mathematicians and linguists be found by providing yet more degrees in Golf Course Studies or Floristry or modules on philosophy from Kant to Kant?

And perhaps, we did not actually need such a rapid increase in graduates, many with disproportionate, and therefore dangerously frustrated, expectations; perhaps, if we had scrutinised other international models and as the National Skills Audit confirms, we might have felt that it was more at a lower and intermediate stage that our skills and flexibility were nationally so deficient.

How is it such confusion can occur, unless it has all been planned by someone deservedly obscure on Floor 25 who is manifestly a few entries short of a dictionary?

Like London's, our educational skyline is not cohesively planned. No doubt Sir Ron Dearing is at it through his telescope. I trust he will focus first on the students.

Tony Evans is headmaster of The Portsmouth Grammar School and chairman of the Headmasters and Headmistresses' Conference.

Campaign breaks down the barriers

Doug McAvoy and Richard Brewster report on the success of a joint initiative to open up state schools to the disabled



Come on in: a disabled boy joins a mainstream class

A drive to open up state schools to hundreds of disabled pupils is set to win the backing it needs. Only thanks to the Schools Access Initiative is a picture emerging of the extent to which such children were prohibited from attending their local schools.

In the next few days the Government will almost certainly announce that the initiative — which encourages mainstream schools to become more accessible to pupils with disabilities — will continue.

In this, the initiative's first year, the Government has provided £7.6 million which, with partnership funding, means that £10.6 million is available to local authority and voluntary-aided schools. Recognition of the need is the direct result of a campaign by the National Union of Teachers and the charity Scope.

The campaign started in 1992, when both organisations realised that neither government nor education authorities knew whether schools were accessible to disabled children. Coopers and Lybrand was commissioned to investigate and its report, *Within Reach*, painted a bleak picture.

A second survey revealed that only 10 per cent of secondary schools and 26 per

cent of primary schools were completely accessible. A model was then tested which would ensure that half the secondary schools became totally accessible, and 75 per cent of primary schools could achieve 75 per cent accessibility.

Coopers and Lybrand concluded that it would cost £59 million for primary schools and £251 million for secondary schools to achieve the targets.

all parties called on the Government to reaffirm its initiative.

Lord Henley, the schools minister, recognised the importance of the initiative but called for evidence of its impact. In just over a week Scope and the NUT received evidence from a large number of schools. Projects included the construction of handrails, ramps, new floors and storage spaces for electric wheelchairs. Others were using the money to improve access for pupils with sensory disabilities.

Most of the resources went to improving physical access. One high school in Hull reported: "It is difficult to imagine how the school could have coped without the essential alterations which had to be made (ramps and a toilet for the disabled) for our first severely physically handicapped pupil."

But the funding may not be enough. A telling letter from a school in Liverpool illustrates the limitations of bidding arrangements which favour matched funding from outside sponsors: "This school is situated in an area of huge economic disadvantage... the community can do very little to help itself without financial support."

Another school summed up the collective feelings about receiving a fraction of their original bid: "We have only just made a start. The school's commitment to disabled access is for all five or seven years of a pupil's stay here. I hope the Government's commitment is for more than one year."

Virtually every letter we received recognised the symbolic as well as the practical value of the funding. The initiative is unique because it has involved co-operation between the Government, a

teachers' union, a voluntary organisation, schools and local education authorities.

It will be for the new government after the election to decide whether to maintain a continuing commitment to a project which has provided

educational opportunities to a large number of children and young people who otherwise would have been denied them.

Doug McAvoy is General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers. Richard Brewster is the chief executive of Scope.

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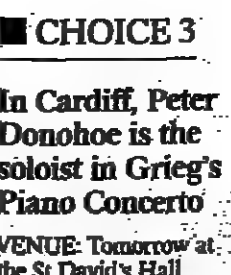
CHOICE 1
Larry Lamb plays
Fellini in the
British premiere of
the musical *Nine*
VENUE: Now in preview
at the Donmar Warehouse



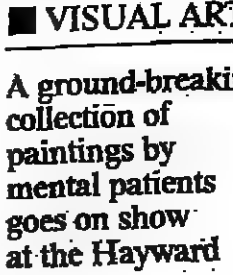
CHOICE 2
Small dose of
Lloyd Webber:
Aspects of Love
hits Basingstoke
VENUE: Now in preview
at the Haymarket



CHOICE 3
In Cardiff, Peter
Donohoe is the
soloist in Grieg's
Piano Concerto
VENUE: Tomorrow at
the St David's Hall



VISUAL ART
A ground-breaking
collection of
paintings by
mental patients
goes on show
at the Hayward



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LONDON

BUNNY MATTHIAS & CO Dance music architecture in the company's new, full-length work, *Viewpoint*, accompanied by a soundtrack composed by Neil Wilson. Two enormous, interlocking structures dominate a moving set in which the horizon and perspective shift with each movement of the eight dancers. Queen Elizabeth Hall, (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 8.30pm, tomorrow, 8pm and 10pm, Sun, 3.30pm.

NINE The British premiere of the musical *Nine* based on Fellini's 1966 film *Nine*. Larry Lamb plays the great director, among the seven who battle him up and down the stairs. Donmar Warehouse, (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 8.30pm, tomorrow, 8pm, Sun, 3.30pm.

WOMAN WALKER The first London-based *WOMAN* (World of Music, Arts and Dance) festival. Global Spirit, takes place this weekend. Evening concerts, live jazz, creative workshops and children's events all contribute to the festival's global village atmosphere. Among the highlights is the British debut performance of Ismaïla, Babu of Rwanda. Barbican Centre, (0171-638 8891 for tickets and further information). Tonight-Sun.

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment
compiled by Gillian Massey

ELSEWHERE

BASINGSTOKE Andrew Lloyd Webber's romantic musical, *Aspects of Love*, premieres tonight, with a gala performance tomorrow, and opens on Monday. The West End cast includes Kate Norington, Matthew Carmichael and Paul Bonney. Adnan Reynolds directs a romantic production. Haymarket, (01256 485568). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat 5pm, Sun, 3pm, until January 11.

BRISTOL The French planetarium, *Quantities*, gives the last night of its year in the Bristol & Bath International Planetarium. The planetarium, which was inaugurated by the music of Bach, whose Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor and Partita No 2 in C minor are played alongside Brahms' *Waltzes* and Fugue on a Theme by Handel. St George's, Brandon Hall (0117-963 0339). Tonight, 7.30pm, mat 5pm, Sun, 3pm.

CARDIFF Vladimir Jurowski conducts the Orchestra of the Welsh National Opera in Grieg's music for Peer Gynt and the composer's dramatic Piano Concerto. St David's Hall, (01792 444444). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.

LONDON GALLERIES

British Library Galleries Designer Bookends (0171-323 7111). *Chloe Beckett: The British Art of Bookbinding, 1780-1890* (0171-323 7251). *Chloe Beckett: The British Art of Bookbinding, 1780-1890* (0171-323 7251). *Chloe Beckett: The British Art of Bookbinding, 1780-1890* (0171-323 7251).

VISUAL ART: A fine show of work by psychiatric patients comes to the Hayward. Plus galleries

Very sane inside insanity

In 1919 the German psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn set in motion major changes in the treatment of mental patients when he started to collect their art, a selection of which is on show at the Hayward Gallery.

The entire collection amounts to more than 6,000 works by patients of psychiatric hospitals throughout Europe. Included in the exhibition are paintings of pneumatic women and religious revelations, intricate drawings of mechanical inventions and ornamental decoration and photographs of sexual fantasy.

Prinzhorn's interest in such art was unique when he began working at the psychiatric clinic at Heidelberg University in 1919. He had a doctorate in art history and rescued the work from the diagnostic clutches of his colleagues, who regarded their patients' art as rubbish. Prinzhorn even wrote thank-you letters to some patients and gave them presents.

Such sensitivity was virtually unheard of in many lunatic asylums, where patients generally had to resort to drawing or painting on the back of envelopes, toilet paper, margarine cartons or scraps of cloth. But Prinzhorn wanted to make a name for himself. The collection was the basis for his book *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, in which he related the patients' illnesses to their creativity.

The book became a bible, not only for psychiatrists, but also for many artists, since Prinzhorn placed the importance of individual expression over the traditional beliefs of the art establishment. Consequently *The Miraculous Shepherd* by August Natter, an electrician from Ravensburg, is reflected in a collage by Ernst, while the faces in the religious watercolours of August Klett, a wine merchant born in Heidelberg, inspired Emil Nolde in depicting apostles. Jean Dubuffet even set off to find other psychotic art in mental institutions himself.

But the response of such artists to the



Untitled, by Karl Gustav Sievers. One of the 6,000 works found in Europe's asylums by Hans Prinzhorn

collection was a gift to the Nazis in their attempt to discredit modern art. Prinzhorn died from typhus in 1933 and Nazi doctors once again claimed that a "lunatic" could not be capable of real art. "Lunatic art" from the Prinzhorn collection was then hung side by side with work by artists such as Nolde and Klee to point up the similarities in an exhibition of Degenerate Art which made a four-year tour of Germany and Austria.

Worse still, a number of the "lunatic" artists were deemed incurable and dispatched for extermination. Among

them was the businessman Josef Heinrich Grebing, from Magdeburg, whose collages - mixing watercolours and words, maps and magical symbols - might easily have been done yesterday: as might the handsome jacket of Agnes Richter (origin and fate unknown), embroidered with autobiographical texts.

Surprisingly enough, perhaps because it was regarded as ridiculous, the collection itself survived the Nazis. In recent years, thanks to artists such as Georg Baselitz, it has been retrieved from obscurity, conserved and extended.

Baselitz appears particularly influenced by the murderous crowds and imbecile phantasies of the locksmith Johann Knopf. Like most inmates, Knopf, who died in an asylum in 1910, was diagnosed schizophrenic. Yet he managed to portray, on purloined scraps of office paper, an extraordinary draughtsmanship, imagination and an enduring sense of humour.

ALISON BECKETT

Beyond Reason: Art and Psychiatry is at the Hayward Gallery, London SE1 (0171-928 3144) until Feb 23

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

HOUSE FULL, returns only

SEATS AT ALL PRICES

DICK DANDY Action hero of the 1940s comes to the London of the 1990s in *Dick Dandy*, a musical by David Lauder. Theatres: (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 7.45pm, mat 5pm, Sun, 3.30pm, until January 25.

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THE ADVENTURES OF

THEATRE 1

Serious questions get the funny treatment in David Schneider's play, *The Eleventh Commandment*

THEATRE 2

... while the RSC curiously decides to revive Molière's misogynist satire, *Learned Ladies*

THE TIMES ARTS

MUSIC 1

The veteran singer Anna Tomowa-Sintow demonstrates staying power at the Wigmore

MUSIC 2

... while Yuri Temirkanov leads the Royal Philharmonic in an enchanting programme

THEATRE: A provocative first play from alternative comedian David Schneider; plus Molière revived by the RSC

Jewish jokes and tragedy

According to David Schneider's funny but tormented first play, *The Eleventh Commandment* runs like this: "Thou shalt not give any posthumous victims to Hitler." And according to the British-Jewish mother who dominates her estate-agent son and her bowed and almost speechless husband, this means ensuring that her descendants do not deviate an inch from the faith, the traditions or the blood of her forebears. To marry an outsider is to help to finish Hitler's work for him.

The Eleventh Commandment Hampstead

Serious stuff, difficult stuff; and Sheila Steafel, playing a figure who might have been the merest caricature, sustains dignity and a certain gravity even when she is parading attitudes her author finds maddeningly extreme. Yet Schneider performs on the alternative-comedy circuit, and the overall tone of his play is humorous, in a stricken, surreal sort of way. After all, it opens with a winged angel in a dirty mac arriving at Abraham's Thirties suburban house in order to tell him to begot the Jewish nation into being.

But the opening scene also finds Schneider himself in a chair that has come either from *Mastermind* or Sing Sing, quivering helplessly as he is arraigned for being 30, single and childless. He himself plays estate-agent Dan as a goofy, toady need desperately trying to escape a mother who fills his flat with plastic cartons of food and materialises in bed, wearing an overcoat and a snuffy expression, when he is trying to find sexual oblivion with a sexy shiksa.

The shiksa is Tracey Lynch's Christina, who comes of Ulster

Protestant stock and gives Dan the character a chance of love, and Schneider the playwright an opportunity to broaden his theme. In a climactic scene at (where else?) Me's dinner table, the young woman gives a robust answer to the charge that she will stand aside while some future Nazi herds Dan into a cattle truck. She accuses her father of racism and Orange-style bigotry; and it is clear that she has her author's wary sympathy.

In effect, his play is asking the same questions about religious traditions and freedom as the Royal Court's current *East is East*, which concerns English Muslims. But Ayub Khan-Din's piece strikes me as less contentious than *The Eleventh Commandment*. Though

Schneider maintains a respect for Dan's mother, he clearly thinks she is exploiting the Holocaust and obsessively playing the victim in order to control her son. The play, you feel, is the protest of one Jewish generation against another.

Again, this is edgy, tricky stuff; yet the piece also displays its Jewishness in its refusal to keep laughter at bay. The characters include a bumbling Moses, a Ghost of Christmas Past, embarrassed to find himself in the wrong play, and two cops dedicated to "making sure that Jews remain Jews". I'm not saying that Schneider and his director, Matthew Lloyd, are wholly successful in reconciling serious ideas with comic situations; but together they have created a diverting and provocative evening.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



And lo, there appeared an angel in a dirty mac: from left, James Clyde, Jeffrey Segal and David Schneider playing it for laughs

Girls don't just wanna have fun

THIS is a curious play to be given a major production at this time in the history of the world. Molière's ridicule of the intellectual ambitions of women has its place in the history of ideas, and the programme notes go to some pains to assure us that we do not have to see the play as an anti-feminist satire. But Molière introduces no female character who is not a) disguising her ignorance behind an inflated style of talk, or b) renouncing all interest in science, philosophy and literature because what a woman should do is devote

herself to a man.

This is not to say that Steven Pimlott's production, transferred from Stratford, contains no pleasures along the way. Philaminte, wife of the mild-tempered philistine Chrysale, has selected the self-satisfied, transparently trashy Trissotin (Roger Allen at his most uncanny) as her pet poet and is determined that he shall marry her younger daughter, Henriette (Jane Gurnett). The girl is in love with a

The Learned Ladies Barbican Pit

decent chap who once courted her elder sister, Armande (Niamh Cusack), who may now be posturing as a learned young lady but is just a jealous woman at heart.

Alison Fiske is enjoyably absurd as Philaminte's sister-in-law Belise, and John Quayle, in his first season with the RSC, is endearingly apologetic as Chrysale, the gentle worm that turns. For some arcane reason Pimlott begins the play in costume and

changes everyone into modern dress for the second half, presumably to suggest that we have these feminist posers with us today. At the close Caroline Blakiston's hitherto implacable Philaminte stares in dismay at the daughter whose proper care she has neglected and gazes at us as if for guidance. But what could we say to a woman who has been forcing unwelcome marriages on her children, and claims to have seen men on the moon?

JEREMY KINGSTON

Magical tour of toytown

WE WERE promised a "Magical Evening" for the Royal Philharmonic concert on Tuesday night — broadcast live by Classic FM — and that is exactly what we had. With Disneyland Paris the sponsors, it was wholly appropriate to have a programme of French music on the themes of childhood and enchantment. But there was magic, too, in the way these players delivered the goods.

After a period in the doldrums, the Royal Philharmonic has begun to transform itself once again into an elite body. The silky sheen of the strings is a precious asset, while both solo contributions and ensemble work in other departments impressed throughout the pro-

CONCERT

RPO/Temirkanov Barbican

gramme. Indeed, it was only a matter of bars into the first item, Ravel's *Mother Goose* suite, that the RPO strings, under Yuri Temirkanov, whisked us into a make-believe world of ravishing loveliness. Fauré's *Dolly* suite demands similar tenderness and received it here, with Temirkanov avoiding any hint of sentimentality with his well-sculpted phrasing.

In Bizet's *Jeu d'Enfants* suite the orchestra's virtuosity came to the fore. The cornet solos in the opening March were crisply delivered by Gerry Ruddock and Brian Thomson, while the spinning top of the "Impromptu" displayed admirable ensemble playing.

One of Temirkanov's great talents is that of an entertainer, and there was dry wit in his account of Dukas's *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Ravel's *La Valse* evokes the world of the Straussian waltz, only to whirl it in a vortex of post-First World War angst. Temirkanov and his players were suitably alluring in their Viennese garb, making the final descent into chaos all the more chilling.

BARRY MILLINGTON

RECITALS: A long-delayed, exuberant debut, and a tribute to a kindly critic

HAVING waited for at least 50 years to make her Wigmore Hall debut, the great soprano Anna Tomowa-Sintow doubtless felt free to celebrate the occasion exactly as she pleased. At the fourth or fifth encore — I lost count — her pianist Helmut Oertel was unceremoniously pushed aside, and the great glittering powder-blue presence sat at the piano and accompanied herself with abandon in one of several impassioned folk-songs, presumably from her native Bulgaria.

This gesture came as the natural climax to an evening of characteristically expansive performances. Tomowa-Sintow's unaffected rapport with an audience showed itself immediately in an introductory group of Tchaikovsky songs — and then came Brahms. The voice has lost none of its power over the years; though its potency is now more than ever an emotional one. With a little of its natural bloom faded, and its sureness of intonation occasionally faltering, the voice refuses to sacrifice ardour for mere accuracy.

Free as a songbird

Some slight hardening in the extremes of her vocal register was moderated by brightly animated words, and by the fingers of Oertel, whose nuances of colour in songs as different as Brahms's *Song* and Richard Strauss's *Morgen* was eloquently supportive. Tomowa-Sintow is one of this century's great Strauss interpreters: her Marshallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* was vividly recalled in *Freundliche Vision*.

Those, like me, who remember Peter Stadlen, who died earlier this year, as the unfathomable chief critic of *The Daily Telegraph* and a kindly senior colleague, teasing one's callow critical responses in pungently Viennese tones, knew only a fragment of the man.

He was also the pianist who

had studied with Webern and shared the concert platform with Kathleen Ferrier. This, too, was the man who fled to England in 1939 only to be transported to Australia where, in his internment camp, he put on a performance of Handel's *Israel in Egypt*. His life was celebrated on Tuesday in a Wigmore concert organised by the Anglo-Austrian Music Society.

He was never one to give his audiences or his readers an easy ride. True to form, this concert began with the relay of an uncompromisingly dense talk he had given on Radio 3 in 1980 in which he described Webern's own instructions on the playing of his *Variations* Op.27. Stadlen had premiered the work in 1937, and his recorded performance from 1948, together with his words,

revealed Webern as, deep down, an incorrigible old Romantic.

Stadlen-as-critic would, I suspect, have admired young Christoph Berner's way with Schoenberg. The Viennese pianist gave a lucid and affecting account of the *Three Piano Pieces*, Op.11. Berner's performance of Beethoven's last piano sonata, which ended the concert, was also something of a revelation: it had a fearless strength of purpose, and a clear-sighted vision which only just stopped short of the sublime.

Song was at the evening's heart: Berg's *Three Early Songs* and a group of eight by Schubert. Stadlen would have been delighted to witness Imogen Cooper, daughter of his senior colleague, Martin, as the eloquent accompanist to the young mezzo-soprano Jane Irwin whose voice is, as yet, more focused than her Lieder interpretations. Stadlen would doubtless have offered a word of kindly advice. His words, his music-making and his spirit live on.

HILARY FINCH

IRVING'S STARTLING PLAY ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

LITTLE EYOLE

CAST INCLUDES
DERBIE CROTTY
ROBERT GLENISTER
DAVID LEWIS
JOYCE PEARCE
BRIDGET TURNER

DIRECTED BY ADRIAN NOBLE
DESIGNED BY BOB HOWELL
LIGHTING BY JEAN KILMAN

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POP 1

Oddballs from Buckinghamshire, but at least Tiger offer something that isn't derivative



POP 2

... while Judie Tzuke, the one-woman record industry, excels on *Under the Angels*

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 3

... but The Hoax stray off course with *Impossible*, after the bluesy promise of their first album



POP 4

... and Björk offers a cold and unmemorable exploitation of the remix market with *Telegram*

The first Noël that isn't more like Liam

Good news for lovers of good music - just for once, you do not have to hibernate this cool yuletide

Have you done your Christmas shopping yet? You have? So you'll have heard *I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day* quite a lot, then. And *Merry Xmas Everybody*. And *Rockin' around the Christmas Tree* - not the old, annoying version, but the horrid, faux-wacky version by Mel Smith and Kim Wilde, replete with "off-the-cuff" remarks and that ultra-depressing bit where it all stops, and then starts again. Given the plague-like prevalence of these records, you will doubtless be longing to purchase a large truck, drive the length and breadth of Britain collecting every single pressing in existence, before dumping them in a large pit, covering them in brandy, dropping a match, and watching them burn blue and red and melted. There would then follow a period of insane, pagan celebration, followed by an almost post-coital calm, as the realisation sinks in that Top Shop and Woolworths are now safe to enter once again, free from "jolliness" and anything approaching a singalong.

background, while your extended family issues divorce proceedings over the pudding. I doubt there is a single person in Britain who has come home from work and put on, by choice, *Lonely this Christmas*, by Mud. We all hate Christmas records. We just haven't realised yet that we do.

What is needed are new



CAITLIN MORAN

Christmas songs, reflecting what Christmas really involves in us. A couple of albums full of vague melancholy, drunken self-pity; relief that you've got a week off work; insane hope that it might snow; a nagging feeling that believing in God might actually make you happier, and indignation. Luckily, the more interesting record shops will be able to supply you with records that fulfil all these needs. You could start with *Just Say Noël* (Geffen Records), which surprises you with the revelation that indie-country music is astonishingly Christmassy. Portions of the royalties go to charity, which makes *Just Say Noël* the ideal thing to spend your bread-sauce money on. Because, admit it, bread sauce is horrible.

The album includes the delights of the Posties' pedal-

steel racked *Christmas* (made all the more heart-breaking by guestwailing from Velocity Girls Sarah Shannon), which recalls the darker, twangier moments of *Out of Time*. Further in, Remy Zero do that country-misery thing on their *Christmas* to deliciously weepsome effect. Elastica's brooding *Gloria* is a carol singing with flick-knives and boomerangs; while Beck's *The Little Drum Machine Boy* admirably replicates the queasy pride one feels after existing purely on fun-sized chocolate bars for three days.

Of course, the original Christmas songs - carols - understood the yuletide mixture of party joy and terrified, doomed misery perfectly. *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, *The First Noël*, *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen* and *Away in a Manger* are some of the most beautiful, throat-swelling songs in existence, and the edgy mania in *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen* predated the paranoid euphoria of (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?* by a hundred years.

The other great thing about carols is that they suit women's voices far better than most pop or rock, something New York's Roches understand. Three sisters who harmonise like angels cover all the above-mentioned carols, plus 20 others, on *We Three Kings* (MCA). The title track is lushly gothic, augmented with a tender oboe and, yep, restless country guitars. The swooning "Ooooooh" that leads up to the chorus is utterly thrilling, and knocks *Mary's Boy Child* by Boney M into an annoyingly cheerful Santa hat.



Cats that got the cream: Tiger have a moral advantage by owing no dues to the great names of the past, but what on earth are they on about?

New stars of a rare stripe

TIGER

We are Puppets (Trade/Island 524 316 £9.99) AT LAST, a new British group that does not immediately remind you of an old British group. Having contrived to make a debut album with no obvious Beatles or Bowie influences and using no specific punk, pop or rock act's sound as a blueprint, Tiger have already won a rare moral victory long before the question "Are they any good?" rears its ugly head.

The downside of such resourcefulness is that, without

any of the familiar reference points, it takes a few hearings to latch on to what the five-piece from Buckinghamshire are all about. Their untoured, low-fi approach, which involves lashings of heavily fuzzed guitar and a lot of whooping and yelping, produces its best results on pop/dance crossover tracks such as *My Puppet Pal* and *Sorry Monkeys*.

Another piece of the jigsaw that refuses to slot into the obvious place is the decidedly oddball lyrics. In *Shamed all Over*, Dan Glaister puts a typically eccentric spin on the old theme of boy/girl communication breakdown: "She's a Belgian and I can't even spell her name/Whoa, yeah, and she can't understand me." It is almost as hard to work out what Tiger are driving at, but at least it is different, and it sounds like fun.

JUDIE TZUKE

Under the Angels (Big Moon BM 001) JUDIE TZUKE has bravely taken to running her career as a cottage industry. The English singer with a voice like cool honey enjoyed a peak of popularity with her 1979 hit single *Stay With Me Till Dawn*, which was followed by a string of Top 20 albums. Now she has started her own mail-order record label and, as well as being the principal artist, it seems she is also head of press and promotions and chief packer. As a result, *Under the Angels*... is available (£13.50) from PO Box 347, Weybridge KT13 9WZ or on the Internet at <http://www.bogo.co.uk/past/>

However, anyone who imagines that musical corners may have been cut in the process will be pleasantly surprised. Tzuke seems to have poured herself into the task, heart and soul. Whether expressing regret and even extreme bitterness, as on *I Never Liked the Way you Looked*, or in the grip of an emotional panic attack (*Without Love*), there is a simple honesty about her words that complements the soft-focus arrangements of her lullaby-rock songs.

THE HOAX

Impossible (Code Blue/East West 0630-16639 £15.49) THE Hoax were something of a novelty back in 1994 when they burst out of Wiltshire with a debut album, *Sound Like This*, that updated the high-voltage, blues-rock sound of the late Savie Ray Vaughan. *Impossible*, the follow-up, finds them way off-course in an ambitious but misguided attempt to progress beyond their muso roots and create an album with a broader commercial appeal.

Thanks to songs such as *Let It Ride* and *Got It Bad*, which mix road-hardened rock riffs with whimsical touches of progressive funk, they now sound like a poor man's version of the Spin Doctors. The impression is reinforced

by various bite-sized nuggets of pseudo-Zen philosophy clumsily inserted into lyrics such as *Empress's New Clothes*: "You can see the cherry on top/So you're gonna lose a slice of the cake." On heavier tracks it simply sounds as if they have been listening to too many Robin Trower albums. What the Hoax need is less of the swifty tempo changes and almost-pop tunes, and a return to the driving 12-bars that got them started.

BJÖRK

Telegram (One Little Indian TPLES1 £12.99) HALFWAY between a vanity project and a cash-cow, the remix album is a questionable exercise at the best of times. On *Telegram*, the brief is to transport a bunch of previously released songs, most of them from this year's *Post* album, into an alternative electronic reality. Even allowing for the inclusion of acoustically re-recorded versions of *Hyperballad* (with the Brodsky Quartet), *Isobel* and *My Spine*, the result is a cold, detached and resolutely unmelodic collection of doodles masquerading as an album.

In its most extreme form, as with the distorted, random percussion effects which dominate the Further Over the Edge Mix of *Enjoy*, the process can render the number virtually unlistenable.

DAVID SINCLAIR

1. (What's the Story) Morning Glory?.....Oasis (Creation)
2. Shoooh.....Skunk Anansie (One Little Indian)
3. Spiders.....Space (Sub)
4. Post/Telegram.....Björk (One Little Indian)
5. Very Best Of.....Buddy Holly (Dino)
6. Definitely Maybe.....Oasis (Creation)
7. Garage Flower.....Stone Roses (Silvertone)
8. Coming Up.....Suede (Nude)
9. Backstreet Boys.....Backstreet Boys (Jive)
10. Ugly Beautiful.....Babybird (Echo)

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Beauty and the East

Our Price Christmas Dilemmas - No.1



POP 5

Miss Ross turns on the charm: Queen Diana sets out to woo Britain all over again



POP 6

The gangsta-rap of Snoop Doggy Dogg is outclassed as Wembley enjoys a night of black American music



JAZZ 1

John Zorn delves into Yiddish klezmer music for inspiration on his fine new album *Masada*



JAZZ 2

... while the Mike Westbrook Band draws fruitfully on many traditions on *Bar Utopia*

Beauty and the beast

AN event such as *Super Jam 1* would once have found its natural London home at the old Hammersmith Odeon. Clutching my crampions and mint cake for the climb to row W on the eastern face of Wembley Arena, I noticed empty seats and wondered if this impressive black music package had over-reached itself. But Wednesday's unfilled spaces had more to do with under-promotion than punter indifference, and last night's second arena show, the first to be announced, was a sellout.

Early signs from the stage were not encouraging as New York soul sisters SWV appeared with a 33 per cent reduction in staff. Leanne Lyons having suffered a family bereavement. Recalling their most cited influences,

LIVE GIG

Super Jam 1
Wembley Arena

this meant we were now down to the equivalent of Diana Ross and one Supreme. Still, Tamara Johnson and Cheryl Gamble gave an undiluted performance of upperclass urban hits such as *Right Here* and *You're the One*.

The stage reset with admirable speed, the stakes were immediately upped by Blackstreet, whom producer Teddy Riley has crafted into the most fully rounded R&B group of the day. They opened with a theatrical *For* from the outstanding album, *Another Level*. As on their last visit (two years ago, to dear old Hammersmith), Blackstreet invited favourable comparisons with the likes of the mighty Temptations. The breakthrough single *No Diggity* was boldly delivered and ecstatically received.

All of which soulful stuff left Snoop Doggy Dogg out on a limb as the incongruous gangsta-rapping bill-topper. Tracks from his new US No 1 album *The Doggfather* were to the fore, with guest appearances by fellow stars Warren G and Nate Dogg. Nothing much to change the image of gangsta-rappers as overpaid braggarts wandering around the stage shouting and swearing, but that, it seems, is what the audience wants.

PAUL SEXTON



Call me Miss Ross: Diana Ross likes to keep a tight rein on what she does in her career and how she is represented in public — "You can get a reputation from asserting yourself, but..."

Why Diana still reigns Supreme

Like most of the rest of us, Diana Ross is fretting about being behind in her preparations for Christmas. "I managed to get to Harrods," she confides, "but it was so noisy that I could only stay a short while — my ears are very sensitive. Yet I need to get organised, and I could never let someone else do my shopping."

Certainly, her schedule while briefly in London is so tightly packed that you feel almost apologetic for being a part of it. "But we're here for a reason, so it's OK," she beams, not needing to add that the reason is to sell a new single, and to support a recently released compilation album of earlier ballad hits. And experience must have convinced both her and her record company of the wisdom of treating us to the full-on Diana experience.

Bring her in to guest, glamorously begowned, on certain key television variety slots — Des O'Connor's show has proved particularly lucky — and, bingo! Suddenly, songs too subtle normally to win daytime radio-play become chart-toppers. Britain's love affair with pop-soul's first ever diva has endured partly because she has consistently matched our fantasy of how such an entity should look, partly because her light and fluid voice has been able to adapt to changing musical fashions, and partly because she has, by her own admission, "somehow always been a magnet for good songs". The cumulative effect of this triple-whammy allows Ross, now 52, still to compete here in a marketplace dominated by female singers of a very different stylistic persuasion — the vocal showboaters for whom technique is all.

"I admire the girls who can do it," she insists. "But you need an incredible set of pipes to carry off that sort of riffing, to play around with the notes in that way, and it's not the way for me to sell a lyric to an audience. When I first started singing, I had a really small, nasal-sounding voice, and though it's matured as I've matured, I know that I've been lucky just to have

Alan Jackson
falls under the irresistible spell of the favourite diva of pop-soul

always had some distinctive quality that has allowed people to recognise me. Like most popular singers, I've never studied music. And I certainly never think about technique."

This apparently sincere self-assessment, and her consistently friendly manner, are at odds with

Like most popular singers, I've never studied music

the imperious and temperamental star of media legend — she who not only must be obeyed, but also addressed always as Miss Ross. She sighs. Yes, she has felt misrepresented. Yes, it is like finding oneself turned into a cartoon. "And for a while it hurt, but now I accept it. It's strange how easily negative labels are attached to women who want to exert control over their own careers or take responsibility for how they're represented."

And that is exactly what she wants. Her children are the chief priority, she says: eldest daughter Rhonda, 25, from a relationship with Ross's first mentor, Motown founder Berry Gordy, is an aspiring jazz vocalist; sisters Tracee and Chudney, 23 and 21, from a first marriage to press agent Robert

Silberstein, also have showbusiness aspirations; sons Ross, nine, and Evan, eight, from her current marriage to Norwegian businessman Arne Naess, live with her on a Connecticut estate and in New York, where she plans her work commitments around their school lives. "But after all of that, I look to be in control of my own work. And sometimes that means saying, 'No, I just can't sing that song.' You can get a reputation from asserting yourself like that, but..."

Ross shrugs her shoulders to dissociate herself from such negative thoughts. She prefers positivity. "I'm an ideas-orientated person. I'm always working on lots of things at once. I want to live my life, to use it up. I read educational or inspirational works. And I make time every day to sit and be quiet. You have to make the space to recharge."

There is an essential pragmatism to her, though, an acceptance of the fact that even positive thinking and inspirational texts cannot influence every aspect of her life. For example, while she remains a consistent hitmaker in Britain, she does not attempt to rationalise why her American chart career has long been dormant. Also, despite an Oscar-nominated movie debut as Billie Holiday in *Lady Sings The Blues*, she acknowledges that this parallel career has not gone entirely as she would have hoped. "For years, I walked around Hollywood with the Josephine Baker story, but couldn't make it happen. Eventually I had to let go."

But right now, it is time for her close-up. "Photo sessions don't work for me unless there's music — it brings me alive," she says, rising from her chair, a super-toned, super-charged figure in Dorina Karan black. As she diverts back to her hotel room in search of a suitable tape, passing staff-members step aside and bow. Even when experienced fleetingly, Ross's diva effect proves an impossible act to resist.

● The compilation album *Voice of Love* is available on EMI. A new single, *In The One You Love*, is released on Monday

Using their religion

JOHN ZORN
Masada
(DIW-915)

THE speediest way of locating the music on this consistently vibrant and challenging album is to describe it as klezmer — traditional Jewish music with its roots in Eastern

Europe — filtered through early acoustic Ornette Coleman. John Zorn, often cited as the archetypal jazz post-modernist for his restless, channel-hopping eclecticism, here focuses his attention firmly on a single musical subject, described in the album's dedication to Zionist pioneer Asher Ginzberg as a "new Jewish cultural renaissance".

The resulting 11 Zorn compositions, whether superficially jaunty dances or graceful, plaintive laments, bring out all the considerable musicality of his quartet — trumpeter Dave Douglas, bassist Greg Cohen and drummer Joey Baron — but, more importantly, they dramatically emphasise the cogency of claims made by figures as diverse as Britain's Klezmer Swingers and the American avant-garde clarinetist Don Byron concerning the continuing relevance of the Jewish roots of jazz.

KEITH JARRETT
Mysteries: The Impulse Years 1975-1976
(Impulse IMPD-4-189)

FEATURING the celebrated pianist's American quartet in two marathon (contract-fulfilling) recording sessions sandwiching the same band's more famous ECM recordings, *Survivors' Suite* and *Eyes of the Heart*, this intriguing four-CD set documents both the extraordinary rapport of saxophonist Dewey Redman, bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Paul Motian with Jarrett, and — just as absorbing — the tensions that precipitated the band's demise.

At its best, the quartet produced irresistibly joyous music in which Jarrett's vigorous lyricism was tellingly counterbalanced by the freedom Redman and Haden had exploited in their time with Ornette Coleman's groundbreaking acoustic band. Towards the acrimonious end of the group's life, however, the lightly dancing Jarrett themes had been replaced either by Motian's free-floating compositions or by Redman's strongly Coleman-influenced pieces, and the romanticism so prominent in Jarrett's solo work was submerged in the resultant democratic free-jazz-for-all. As

a study of both musical and personal group interaction, this is a fascinating and richly rewarding set.

MIKE WESTBROOK
Orchestra
(ASC CD13)

COMMISSIONED by the 1995 Bath International Festival, with lyrics by short-story writer Helen Simpson, this seven-part meditation on various aspects of the Utopian vision is the latest in a series of projects by composer/pianist Mike Westbrook and singer Kate Westbrook.

Their intelligent use of text to draw together music from all parts of the tradition not only enables a big band to show off its superb ensemble and solo skills, but also confirms the Westbrooks' status as Britain's leading practitioners in a somewhat neglected sub-genre: jazz-cabaret. Thus the blues, Latin rhythms, a straightforward swing and a climactic New Orleans-type free-for-all are all woven, courtesy of Simpson's deceptively simple lyrics and Mike Westbrook's elegant score, into a coherent, thought-provoking but readily accessible whole.

BOBBY PREVITE
Too Close to the Pole
(Enja ENJ-9306 2)

THE latest in a series of adventurous, bright and accessible albums from the New York-based drummer, *Too Close to the Pole* features the current edition of Bobby Previte's septet Weather Clear, Track Fast on five Previte originals and a stately arrangement of *The Countess's Bedroom* from Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*.

Previte's compositions stress textural variety and the slow journey towards bustling climaxes over jazz's conventional theme-solos-theme structure, but fans of everything from avant-rock through minimalism to the woozy rumbustiousness of Charles Mingus will find something to their taste in this heady brew of spurring solo horns, rowdy but smart ensemble work and chattering percussion.

CHRIS PARKER

Our Price Christmas Dilemmas - No.1

I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT GRANDAD'S XMAS PRESENT, I JUST CAN'T SLEEP

DO YOU THINK GRANDAD'S GOT OASIS?

EH... WHAT?

DON'T WORRY LOVE, OUR PRICE WILL BE HAPPY TO REPLACE IT IF HE HAS.

he he he

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These and many more great chart CDs from only £12.99

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ANDRE NATUREL

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Peter Andre 'Natural'

FAITHLESS REVERENCE

Jesus Christ Superstar

JACKSON HISTORY

Duty of care to parent company triable

Barings plc and Another v Coopers & Lybrand (a Firm) and Others

Before Lord Justice Leggatt, Lord Justice Swinton Thomas and Lord Justice Mummery

[Judgment November 22]

Where a parent holding company claimed a direct relationship between it and the auditors of one of its overseas subsidiary companies, and specific facts were pleaded that a duty of care was owed by those auditors to the parent company, separate from any duty owed to the subsidiary as statutory auditors, that was a serious issue to be tried between the parties.

The circumstances showed the present was a proper case for service of proceedings out of the jurisdiction on the auditors.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing the appeal of the fourth and fifth defendants, Khoo Kuan Wing and S. J. Tan, against the dismissal by Mr Justice Chadwick (The Times August 13) of their applications to set aside service on them outside the jurisdiction of a writ issued by the plaintiffs, Barings plc, in administration, and Bishops Court Ltd, in administration and provisional liquidation, formerly Barings Securities Ltd, and also issued against Coopers & Lybrand, Chai Chee Kheng Mah and Poo Bn Shaik Ali Bakar Matrar, the first, second and third defendants. Leave to serve the writ out of the jurisdiction was granted by Master Barratt on January 23.

Mr Sydney Kentridge, QC and Mr Philip Sales for the fourth and fifth defendants; Mr Stanley Burnton, QC, Mr Robert Davies, and Mr Richard Gillis for the plaintiffs; Mr Christopher Butcher for the second and third defendants; the first defendant was not represented.

LORD JUSTICE LEGGATT said that Barings, the English holding company of a group, was based in London and did not trade on its own account. The second plaintiff, "BSL", an indirect subsidiary of Barings, although incorporated in the Cayman Islands, had its business based in London.

BSL and its subsidiaries conducted securities and futures trading. The plaintiffs had brought proceedings against their accountants, Coopers & Lybrand ("C&L"). The second and third defendants were Singaporean partners in Deloitte & Touche, the fourth and fifth defendants partners in Coopers & Lybrand Singapore ("C&LS"). A Singaporean firm associated with C&L.

Barings Futures Singapore Pte Ltd ("BFS"), an indirect subsidiary of BSL, and so of Barings, was incorporated in Singapore and traded on the Singapore International Monetary Exchange.

The plaintiffs in their action sought to blame the auditors for the collapse of the group on February 26, 1995, attributed to unauthorised and loss-making trading by Mr Nicholas Leeson, general manager of BFS between 1993 and 1995.

Before Mr Justice Chadwick the fourth and fifth defendants contended Barings had no good cause of action against them, and that even if it did, England was not the appropriate forum for the trial of the action. Because the action brought by the liquidators of BFS against C&LS in Singapore had since been stayed, C&LS no longer maintained their argument about forum.

Lordship, having set out details of Mr Leeson's unauthorised trading, said that at no time during the audits of BFS's consolidated schedules, prepared for the purposes of the group accounts, did the auditors detect or report on the unauthorised trading or the losses in which it resulted.

On the contrary, those schedules showed BFS to be not only solvent but profitable: successive profits rising to \$9.6 million in 1994 year end, whereas they should have shown a loss of \$180 million at that date, while the balance sheet then recorded assets of \$15 million instead of liabilities amounting to \$20.4 million.

The plaintiffs' claim was based on the duties of C&LS, as reporting accountants, were alleged to have assumed towards Barings in relation to the group accounts and to a particular transaction which

C&LS reported to be a \$50 million receivable due, not to BFS, but to BSL, whereas in fact it was a fiction of Mr Leeson's to explain a discrepancy in BFS's accounts caused by his unauthorised trading.

Mr Kentridge's essential submission was that C&LS owed to Barings no relevant duty of care and that any claim for damages suffered could be claimed, not by Barings as a holding company, which was in effect a shareholder in the subsidiaries, but only by the subsidiary or subsidiaries which suffered damage.

The information the Singaporean auditors were required to supply was simply so that Barings' directors could comply with their obligation to prepare consolidated accounts.

He contended, inter alia, that there was ample authority that, in so far as a company had suffered damage, although the value of the shareholders' shareholding had gone down, in law it was none the less the company alone which could sue for that damage.

Prudential Assurance Co Ltd v Newman Industries Ltd (No 2) [1982] Ch 204, 223-238, and *Caparo Industries plc v Dickman* [1990] 2 AC 65, 626C-E, 627C-D). Thus if Barings had been the direct shareholder of BFS, it would have had no action in respect of any assumed negligence in C&LS's auditing for BFS. The fact Barings was a relatively remote parent made its relationship to the auditors a more remote one.

Mr Burnton relied primarily on the facts as showing how a duty was assumed by C&LS directly to Barings. He added:

(1) The liability of C&LS to BFS was in dispute, particularly because C&LS signed off on their audit report to Barings but not on their audit report to BFS.

(2) C&LS were engaged in relation to Barings in the production of group accounts for which their information and audit reports were to be used; and

(3) BFS acted as broker or agent for other companies in the group. Their losses were not recoverable from C&LS because no duty was owed.

As Barings was owed a duty, it

could itself claim for the loss in the value of the shares in these companies. *George Fischer (Great Britain) Ltd v Multi Construction Ltd, Dedon Ltd (third party)* [1995] 1 BCLC 260.

His Lordship said that if C&LS were in breach of a duty of care owed to Barings in respect of audit information supplied to them and that any claim for damages suffered could be claimed, not by Barings as a holding company, which was in effect a shareholder in the subsidiaries, but only by the subsidiary or subsidiaries which suffered damage.

Any risk of double recovery, such as was envisaged in *Christensen v Scott* [1996] 1 NZLR 320-321, could be avoided if both claims were made in the same action.

The present case differed from the *Prudential Assurance* case because the person in the position of shareholder, Barings, had a right of action independent of the company BFS. On the other hand, unlike the situation in the *George Fischer* case, BFS did have a right of action itself.

As the latter case showed, there was no legal principle that a holding company was unable to recover damages for loss in the value of its subsidiaries, resulting directly from a breach of duty owed to it, as distinct from a duty owed, or not owed, as the case might be, to the subsidiaries.

The argument about duty of care was concluded by the fact that C&LS knew that their audit and report on the consolidated schedules were required so that the directors of Barings could comply with their obligation to provide accounts showing a true and fair view of the group's financial affairs.

C&LS could not have supposed that the only responsibility they assumed to Barings was to submit BFS's accounts in a form suitable for incorporation into the consolidated accounts, and that it mattered not whether they showed a true and fair view of BFS's financial affairs.

Material irregularities, and a fortiori fraud, would normally be brought to light by sound audit

procedures, one of which was the practice of internal controls. An auditor's task was so to conduct the audit as to make it probable that material misstatements in financial documents would be detected. That did not occur and therefore there was a case for C&LS to answer.

The purpose of reporting was not as limited as Mr Kentridge suggested. There was in Mr Burnton's contention that the immediate cause of Barings' loss was the failure of internal control within BFS which allowed Mr Leeson to commit his frauds.

Everything depended on whether C&LS should have detected those frauds since, had they been, further moneys would not have been sent by other companies in the group to BFS with the resultant loss in the value of the shares held by Barings as the holding company.

The crucial point in the present case, said Mr Justice Chadwick, was that Barings pleaded a direct relationship between C&LS and Barings arising from the circumstances in which work was done for, and information was supplied by, C&LS to Barings and their auditors in England (C&L) relating to the preparation of the group's accounts.

Specific facts were pleaded in support of the claim there was an independent and relevant duty of care owed to Barings and separate from any duty owed to BFS.

The determination of the scope of that duty and of the consequences of any breach were matters for evidence and legal argument. As yet, no evidence had been adduced, Barings had established a good arguable case, and his Lordship was satisfied the case was a proper one for service out of the jurisdiction. There was a serious issue to be tried.

His Lordship added that any findings of fact made in the judgment were not final.

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas and Lord Justice Mummery agreed.

Solicitors: Herbert Smith; Slaughter & May; Wilde Sage.

White finger injury risk foreseeable in 1973

Armstrong and Others v British Coal Corporation

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Judge and Lord Justice Waller

[Judgment November 28]

The British Coal Corporation should have recognised by January 1973 that work done by its employees using vibratory tools gave rise to a foreseeable risk of personal injury from the condition known as vibratory white finger.

The Court of Appeal so held in reserved judgments dismissing an appeal by the defendant, the British Coal Corporation, from the decision of Judge Stephenson, sitting as a judge of the High Court at Newcastle upon Tyne on January 15, 1996, on preliminary issues arising in an action by William James Armstrong and eight other plaintiffs, all former employees of the defendant, claiming damages for personal injury for vibratory white finger sustained as a result of the alleged negligence of the defendant.

Mr Richard Maxwell QC, Mr R. F. Owen, QC and Miss Catherine Foster for British Coal; Mr John Hendy, QC, Mr Christopher Carling and Mr Ian Scott for the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE JUDGE said that the plaintiffs had all been employed for substantial periods in the coal industry and had been provided with and used vibratory tools in the course of their employment. The nine cases had been selected as "lead cases", representative of a large number of claims that were pending.

Since 1911 it had been acknowledged that the symptoms, loss and

impairment of circulation in the fingers could result from the use of powered hand-held tools through which vibrations were transmitted. The condition, referred to in the case as VWF, included secondary Raynaud's phenomenon and Raynaud's phenomenon of occupational origin.

Two preliminary issues, heard together by the judge, arose:

1 From what date, if at all, ought the defendant to have recognised that work with the tools gave rise to a foreseeable risk of VWF? The judge's answer was January 1, 1973.

2 From what date, if at all, ought the defendant to have recognised that precautions to guard against that risk could and ought to have been taken? The judge's answer was January 1, 1973, in respect of warnings, system and routine examination and January 1, 1976 in respect of rotation of jobs.

The judge had held that the defendant should have been on notice that there might have been a problem of a significant incidence of VWF following the production of a survey on VWF as an industrial disease in the coal mining industry by Dr Milne, deputy area medical officer for North Yorkshire, in 1968.

Thereafter, the judge held, that with such notice the defendant should have conducted an epidemiological investigation among its employees and after making allowance for the years required to set up the investigation, then conduct it and evaluate its findings. The defendant would on the balance of probabilities have been negligent with clear evidence that there was an unacceptable incidence of VWF consistent with such notice.

The judge also held that the defendant should have conducted an epidemiological investigation among its employees and after making allowance for the years required to set up the investigation, then conduct it and evaluate its findings. The defendant would on the balance of probabilities have been negligent with clear evidence that there was an unacceptable incidence of VWF consistent with such notice.

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BOXING

Hamed faces sternest test

By SRIKUMAR SEN

NASEEM HAMED, the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) featherweight champion from Sheffield, has the most important bout of his career when he meets Tom Johnson, of the United States, at the London Arena on February 8.

Johnson is the International Boxing Federation champion and if Hamed takes his crown it will be the first step on the road to unifying the titles. Hamed said yesterday that he did not expect Johnson to pose any problems for him and that he would knock him out. "It's a fight I've been waiting for ages," Hamed said. "Don't blink in round two."

Johnson, 32, is an ideal opponent for Hamed. He has been finding it more and more difficult to stay on his feet against opponents and he is an important enough name to enhance Hamed's reputation; but the veteran of 47 contests said that he is equally confident.

Johnson has lost only two of his contests and has made 11 successful defences of his title, five times in Europe. He reminded Hamed that he had beaten Manuel Medina despite breaking both his hands during the contest. Hamed had to struggle for 11 rounds to stop Medina, a Mexican.

Duke Darden, Johnson's adviser, said: "Hamed will fall in five rounds because he has no chin and it only needs Tom to catch him once."

The Hamed-Johnson bout heads a \$9 million (about £5.45 million) promotion that will feature three other world title contests. Steve Collins, the WBO super-middleweight champion, and Robin Reid, the World Boxing Council champion at the same weight, will both defend their titles.

RUGBY UNION

Bravery of Reed wins favour with Scotland

By MARK SOUSTER

AFTER two years in the wilderness, Andy Reed, the former British Isles lock forward, has been recalled to the Scotland squad for the Royal Bank international against Italy at Murrayfield a week tomorrow.

From the tone of the comments at a press conference yesterday there is every likelihood that Reed, now of Wasps, will win his eleventh cap, thus completing a successful comeback from debilitating injury that at one stage threatened his career.

The fact that Reed, still only 27, is again in contention can be attributed to his own determination, a move from Bath this summer and Scotland's urgent need for a more dominant force at the set-piece, in particular the lineout and at scrum, where the Scots have been particularly profligate.

He won the last of his ten caps against South Africa in November 1994, having captained Scotland on the tour of Argentina that summer.

Reed is one of three changes to the 21-man squad originally picked for the Australia international; neither Gary Armstrong nor Scott Murray were considered because of injury, while Tom Smith's decision to play for Watsonians last Saturday when clearly unfit and unwell has counted against him, a fact acknowledged by Richie Dixon, the Scotland coach.

Derrick Patterson, of Heriot's FP, comes in as understudy to Bryan Redpath at scrum half, a position in which Scotland are blessed with considerable riches; not so at prop, where Matt Stewart, now under Ian McGeechan's wing at Northampton, is brought into the reckoning.

Stewart was the subject of positive reports on the Scottish Exiles' recent tour of Portugal and Spain, where he was watched by both John Jeffrey and Arthur Hastie, the manager.

Dixon said: "Stewart has been known to us for a long time. We have not had a punishing scrumman for some time, but somehow we have been able to perform miracles with what we have got. Andy Reed has a proven track record. He has had injury problems but we feel he is worthy of his place."

Scotland will award full caps for the first time in a match against Italy, who were sufficiently piqued by their reluctance not to grant international status to the last meeting between the two, in Rieti in January, that they won comfortably. Dixon also believes that Italy will improve considerably from their lacklustre performance against England a fortnight ago.

"England, as they have done to us, took them on up front and beat them that way," he said. "We don't have that kind of team or that kind of mentality, I expect this to be a very exciting game. I felt England answered the question about their style when they played the New Zealand Barbarians, where they were much more dynamic than against Italy. The Italians though were minus three first-choice locks and two of them are back now, so they should present a greater challenge in the lineout."



Pienaar's driving ambition has not been blunted by the pain of rejection. Photograph: David Rogers / ALLSPORT

Clubs name England option for Pienaar

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

AS THE world of rugby union, lurching along under the giddy influence of professionalism, continues to produce juxtapositions that defy beliefs forged on the anvil of amateurism, another startling image has been conjured: an England team running out to contest the 1999 World Cup final with Francois Pienaar leading the way.

Pienaar, as intimately associated with South Africa as Cape wines and car hijackings, lifted the trophy last year after captaining his team to a victory with a spiritual certainty and moral fortitude that did much to bolster the "Rainbow Nation" concept of the country's President, Nelson Mandela.

In an interview with a Johannesburg newspaper yesterday, Pienaar, who this week signed a contract with

Saracens, the Courage league first division side, stressed that he still desperately wanted to play for South Africa, despite being dropped this autumn, but that he could be forced to change nationalities to keep his career alive.

"I just want to play international rugby and if England want to give me the opportunity, then I'll seriously consider it," he said. The terseness of his dismissal, which came as the new South Africa coach, Andre Markgraaff, attempted to stamp his authority on a side failing to recapture the zest of 1995, certainly appeared to offer little hope of a reconciliation.

Pienaar will be 33, a ripe old age for a flanker, by the time the World Cup final is staged in Cardiff, but the South African press were taking his words seriously yesterday. The newspaper explained that, under international Rugby Football Board rules, a

player can switch to another national team if three years have elapsed since the last appearance for his country.

Pienaar last played for South Africa against the All Blacks on August 10 this year and would, therefore, be eligible for England before the World Cup. Thankfully, Pienaar, who led his country 29 times, has remained level-headed. "Flankers usually reach their peak between 27 and 32 years old and I am currently 29, so I still have a few years left."

Pienaar's first game for Saracens will be on December 28, against either Orrell or Sale. Will Jack Rowell, the England manager, be there?

Jason Little, troubled by the knee he injured in the opening match of the Australia tour of Britain, has withdrawn from the XV that will close its itinerary against the Barbarians at Twickenham tomorrow.

ROWING

Bowden gives boost to Britain

By MIKE ROSEWELL

SEAN BOWDEN is to become Great Britain's lightweight men's coach from January, returning to a position in which he and Britain enjoyed great success between 1992 and 1994.

Bowden, who was also head coach for Nottingham County from 1989 to 1994, guided the British lightweight eight to world championship silver and gold medals before taking responsibility for the heavyweight eight in the run-up to the Olympic Games. He was also involved in Cambridge University's Boat Race resurgence in the early Nineties.

In a further boost for the sport, it was also announced yesterday that the National Lottery Sports Fund, with the approval of the Sports Council, has made an £8.9 million award towards the cost of an international-standard 2,000-metre rowing course at the Royal Albert Dock.

The £8.9 million lottery grant for the Docklands rowing course represents 54 per cent of the cost of a three-phase scheme that will produce only the third venue in the United Kingdom to achieve international-course standards.

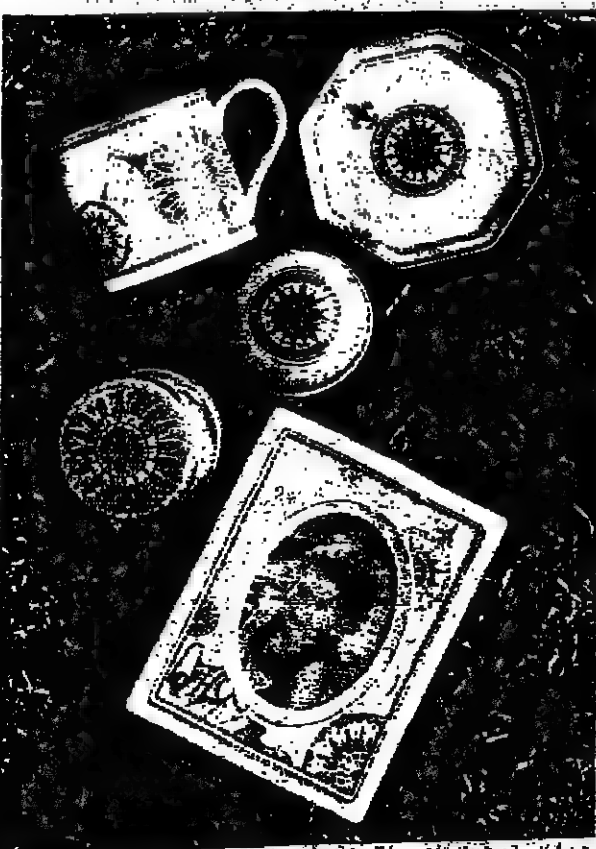
The London Docklands Development Corporation will meet the remaining costs for the venture, which will be used by rowers, canoeists, dragon boats and local schools and children.

Domestic regattas have been held on the dock for ten years, but only over 1,750 metres and with limited facilities.

The award, which is the largest in London to date, will also provide changing facilities, an administration centre, boat storage for 90 eights, workshops, accommodation for competitors and a gymnasium.

AN EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION THE TIMES

WIN A STYLISH SET OF WEDGWOOD CHINA ACCESSORIES



HOW TO ENTER



Continuing our Twelve Days of Christmas competition, *The Times* brings you not eight maids-a-milking but eight sets of Wedgwood Atlas gifts worth more than £130 each.

The Atlas collection is a new, sophisticated range of Wedgwood fine bone china accessories for the office or study. Ocean charts and cartographic references form the basis of this stylish, nautically themed collection which evokes the spirit of the great voyages of discovery of the past.

We have eight sets of prizes to give away, selected from the Atlas collection, comprising a Boerhaave Mug (£21.95), an Octagonal Tray (£16.95), a Small Round Box (£24.95), a Dome Paperweight (£24.95), and a Byron Portrait Frame (£42.50). Other items in the collection, not included in the prize, include a Card Box with Cards (£49.95), a Rectangular Tray (£42.50) and a Desk Clock (£54.95).

WEDGWOOD

To find your nearest stockist please call 01782 282 032

Winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries received. Lines will stay open until midnight tonight. Normal TNL rules apply. Calls cost 45p per minute (cheap rate, 50p per minute at all other times).

CHANGING TIMES

SUCCESS
IT'S A
MIND
GAME

GOLDSMITHS & WALKER & HALL

FOOTBALL: NEAL'S JOB IN DOUBT AS NEW POWER EMERGES AT MANCHESTER CITY

Capital gains count against Lee

By DAVID MADDOCK

MANCHESTER City shareholders yesterday voted to expand their share capital to allow Stephen Boler, a millionaire businessman, a 25 per cent stake in the company. The move signals, effectively, a loss of controlling interest in the club for Francis Lee, who will remain chairman for the immediate future.

Boler will become the biggest single shareholder in the club when he takes up the rights issue in January. He will pay £5 million for approximately six million shares, as will John Wardle, of TD Sports, raising a total of £10 million, which will be made available for transfers.

As the sequence of events unravelled at the club's annual meeting, the long-term future of the club was gradually mapped out. Boler, while declining a place on the board, will be represented by Ashley Lewis, and will dictate the direction of the public limited company. He is hoping to take City back into the FA Cupling Premiership and then float the company.

One of his first moves will be to address the problem of the club's management. Yesterday, in a statement to shareholders, he vowed to strengthen the leadership, and that will lead to an immediate search for a new manager. Phil Neal is in charge at present, but is unlikely to remain so.

Lewis, speaking at the meeting, said Boler, one of Britain's richest men, will play a significant role in the running of the club. "There will be changes," he said. "We will move forward with stronger management within the next few months. Stephen will be involved in decision making through regular meetings with the chairman, and will also help support the financial side of the club."



Boler promises that he will be quick to exert a significant influence at Maine Road. Photograph: News Team

Lee, who took control of City three years ago on a wave of popular support, has been forced into something of a climbdown. Heralded as the man to bring back the good times to Maine Road, he has instead presided over one of the worst periods in the club's history. They have slumped to their lowest position in living memory, fourth from bottom of the Nationwide League first division, and their debts and liabilities now total in excess of £26 million.

He has, he said, been inhibited by a lack of capital; a situation that he claimed has now been resolved. "The cash investment will be made and we will get stuck in, give it a real go and see if we can make it work," Lee said. "If that is not good enough in 12 months' time, then I might have a look at my position. If we go down this season I won't have to, because I will have jumped off the band."

Considering the parlous state of the club, Lee got off rather lightly at a meeting that usually provides fireworks. Still, the cynical City faithful had their moments, usually in the form of the weary irony in which the club's supporters are well versed. "I don't get much pleasure going to a football match at the moment," Lee said, as one line of defence. "We haven't for years," a supporter replied.

There was, however, a serious warning from Elliot Rastman, the manager of Simply Red, the pop group. "We need a reality check here, we are fourth bottom of the

first division and the club has made ridiculous decisions over the past two years," he said. "This is a poor board, and they have taken this club down. Alan Ball was a disgraceful appointment."

Boler is likely to ensure such mistakes are not repeated. "We have taken advice, and we believe City have the financial potential to put them among the top six football clubs. Stephen believes we can achieve that," Lewis said. All Manchester City supporters are praying he is right.

Emerson keeps Middlesbrough waiting

By PETER BALL

IT SOUNDS like a novel about flying by Captain W. E. Johns — *Emerson Falls to Return*. Certainly, the saga of Middlesbrough's missing midfielder is rapidly becoming long enough to fill a book. With the Brazilian adding another chapter yesterday when he failed again to board a plane back to England from

Rio, leaving his relationship with the club at an impasse. Middlesbrough are refusing to take the easy way out and sell Emerson and Keith Lamb, the chief executive, has visited Barcelona and Parma — both of whom are said to be interested in signing the player — to warn them off any further attempts to offer him a move away from Tyneside. On his return, Lamb reiterated

Middlesbrough's readiness to leave Emerson kicking his heels on a Brazilian beach for four years rather than let him leave.

"We can afford to write Emerson off," he said. "but I'm not sure whether the player can afford not to play football for four years. There's a hidden agenda, that's what makes us angry, and we won't be blackmailed. His wife's

alleged problems are at the root of this, but these clubs have been orchestrating this performance for the past month."

There was one glimmer of hope of a resolution yesterday, Emerson reportedly telling a Portuguese journalist that he would like to continue playing for Middlesbrough. If his wife can be persuaded.

"I like Middlesbrough as a

town, and the people are friendly," he said. "I enjoy being in England and think I have adapted to the style of football quite well."

"But I am starting to live a drama. My wife is ill. She has some difficulties to contend with. She doesn't like Middlesbrough as she feels it is too cold. And I find it hard to concentrate on football as my wife is unhappy at the thought of living in Middlesbrough."

Peter Johnson, the Everton chairman, suggested yesterday that the club might leave Goodison Park for a new stadium. "We are one of the best clubs in the Premiership, and we need a more modern stadium," Johnson said.

When parting proves such sweet sorrow

LYNNE TRUSS



Kicking and Screaming

There is a ritual that takes place at football matches, about five minutes from the end. People start to stand up, tighten their scarves and head self-consciously towards the exit, sometimes shepherding small children, as if this forms a respectable excuse for their pathetic lack of backbone.

We purists let them go, of course; disdaining them, we nevertheless stand up to let them squeeze past. We forbear to mention that if they did this sort of thing at *The Seagull*, they would never know Konstantin shoots himself. But when they have finally gone (they sometimes linger at the top of steps, indulging in a last, wishful look) we cross our arms, renew our flagging interest in the game and pray hard for that great, late goal that the goal that those perfidious nobby-pamblers will hear from the car-park, making them feel sick.

I left a match early on Saturday, you see. And I was torn. But it was Sheffield Wednesday v West Ham United at Hillsborough, a goalless draw of the worst variety, in which a heavy ball ricocheted tirelessly back and forth between rival players — with three stupid transactions to every intelligent one.

Amusement, it was as frustrating as hearing amnesiacs recount the plot of *Pulp Fiction*, or watching Laurel and Hardy get the piano up the steps. Only when I made my momentous decision to leave did I realise that I had just spent 85 minutes with my hands on my head, trying to pull myself up physically by the hair.

So I figured that if I walked fast I could reach the car in three minutes and be listening to Radio 5 Live on the road before the others even came out.

Could I live with myself if Konstantin pulled the trigger in my absence? Normally, no. But the lure of the M1 was too much. If he shot himself today, I decided, I would send him a postcard from Newport Pagnell.

God, it was boring. West Ham supporters feared "what a load of rubbish" and "nobody disagreed, in fact, most people nodded grimly. When teams play as badly as this — making no space, huddling together in knots — a horrible thing happens: they appear to multiply on the pitch.

At one point in the second half, I could swear there were 40 of them down there. "It's too crowded," I said to nobody in particular. "Send half of them off, that would get things moving."

The best bit was the music. The cheerful Kop band relentlessly played their walls-of-Jericho stuff, with sackbut, trumpet and drum, but it is often like this: their warm, exotic beat made no difference to the leaden performance on the pitch. In fact, the disparity between the support and the play became quite disturbing — it suggested a level of denial dangerous to the psyche.

Meanwhile, the door Wednesday supporter beside me just remarked with a curled lip: "Making notes!" I smiled inanely, which presumably confirmed his suspicions. Only a girl would make notes at a match such as this one.

So, with five minutes left, I

footy," was a sentence I never thought I would say. "Got to get home now, it's footy" — there's another.

I have been phoning people to chuckle over McManaman's goal against Tottenham Hotspur on Monday, to admire Beckham's sterling work on Wednesday for Manchester United; or to wax indignant about the vicious fouling on Sunday between Chelsea and Leeds United. "Why don't they just give them guns?" I say, wildly (I still haven't hit the right tone for footy banter).

But this is, of course, the real pleasure of this job. Just as becoming freelance was a means of finding out what cats do all day, in leaving football I am finding out what men do with their entire lives. And it is fascinating. It turns out that there is a footy organ in the brain and we have all got it; that starts very small but has potential to expand infinitely, bigger and bigger, usurping the entire consciousness at last — and men have no control over it. Tragically, they lack the vital footy suppressor hormone!

I am so glad I found out. This footy organ is to blame for all sorts of things that alienate the non-footy person. It thrives, for example, on the cruel substitution of "Crazy Gang" for "Wimbledon" or "Lofus Road" for "QPR". Catching up with this lingo is not easy, you know, if your footy suppressor hormone has been doing its job since birth. Before September, Old Trafford and Stamford

Bridge were the only stadiums I knew by name. St James' Park was a place to feed ducks. The idea of Owls being beaten by Hammers would have conjured up an alarming picture in my mind.

Now that my own footy organ has been jump-started, however, I am experiencing first-hand the blank looks I formerly gave, and it is weird. In a travel agent's in Brighton on Tuesday afternoon, I was chatting with two nice women about typhoid jabs, when my football page buzzed thrillingly in my pocket. I drew it out. "Emerson has gone AWOL again!" I announced, delightedly. And they looked at me as if I had just spoken in dog language. I said: "Are you not interested in football, then?" And it was quite astonishing; they really, really were not.

'I was torn, but it was a goalless draw of the worst variety'

smoked out. And despite the guilt, it was the best moment of the afternoon. Outside in the dark, I joined a warm flood of early-leavers and found more space and movement than I had seen inside in the whole game.

While the steadfast purists continued to murmur the old "oooh" within, we nobby-pamblers ran away from the stadium in all directions, as if Bruce Willis had just told us it was about to explode. Of course, the rest of the week it has been footy every night, which helped to heal the wound. "Can't go out, it's

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN
BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

In the past two refreshers I have been discussing the play of high cards to encourage and low cards to discourage. I mentioned that what is a "high" card sometimes only becomes clear on the next round of the suit. These "attitude" signals are used when your partner leads a suit, or when you are discarding.

Today I am discussing length-showing signals. These most usually occur when the declarer or dummy leads a suit. First, why is a length-showing signal necessary? It is to enable your partner to judge when to take his high cards. This is the classical example:

♠ KQJ10
♥ Axx (x)
♦ 982
♣ 982

This is the spade suit in a No-trump contract and dummy has no side entry. When the declarer leads the suit, West wants to hold up the ace until the declarer is out of the suit, but he does not want to hold up too long. That is, if the declarer has two cards in the suit, West should take the second round, but, if he has three cards, West holds up to the third round. The solution is for East to show his length in the suit. He plays play high-low (called a "peter") with an even number of cards, and low-high with an odd number.

So, from holding (i), you play the nine, and from (ii), the two. In this case, West will be able to tell immediately

whether you have an odd or an even number of cards, but, if East had, say, 52 (from which he plays the five) West would not be able to distinguish it from say 985 (from which East also plays the five) until the second round.

When you are petering from four cards, in general you should play the second highest. However, when it is clear that your spot cards have no trick-taking relevance, you should play the highest. So here you play the nine from holding (ii). Notice that will get over the message of an even number more quickly.

In the next example, the length signal does not alter the play in the key suit, but may affect the subsequent play:

♠ A Q J 9
♥ 9 8 2
♦ 9 8 2
♣ 9 8 2

Conditions as before: this is the spade suit in a No-trump contract, and dummy is entryless. When declarer leads the ten of spades, West must show his length, by playing the eight from (i) and the two from (ii). In either case, East should duck smoothly, intending to win next time. If declarer repeats the finesse, in case (i), East can see declarer has three spade tricks, and so may need to find some dramatic defence. In case (ii), East can see dummy is dead and can defend accordingly.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Tactical fiend

It is well known that computer programs exhibit immense tactical rather than strategic strength. It is rare that a program overlooks any tactical solution. In the recent slaughter by Fritz4 against the Slovenian national team, one of the human players took the risk of playing the highly tactical Evans Gambit against the Silicon brain, but White was duly cut down by a perfect response from the imperturbable opponent.

White: Grosz
Black: Fritz4
Bled, November 1996

Evans Gambit

1 ♠ e4
2 Nf3
3 Bc4
4 b4
5 c3
6 d4
7 Qc2
8 Nbd2
9 Nc4
10 Nc3
11 Qc2
12 Nc3
13 Nc3
14 Nc3
15 Qc2
16 Nc3
17 Nc3
18 Nc3
19 Nc3
20 Nc3
21 Nc3
22 Nc3
23 Nc3
24 Nc3
25 Nc3
26 Nc3
27 Nc3
28 Nc3
29 Nc3
30 Nc3
31 Nc3
32 Nc3
33 Nc3
34 Nc3

White resigns

Diagram of final position

Fritz's 8-2 victory against Slovenia, albeit in 30-minute chess, is a gigantic stride forward for the reputation of machines in their battle against human grandmasters.

Times book

The Times Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in *The Times*, and is available now from bookshops or from B. T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01376 321276) at £6.99 plus postage and packing.

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

SPORTS LETTERS

Retuning of BBC's racing

From the Controller of Television Sport, BBC

Sir, It was ironic that your report (December 2) of alleged concerns in the racing industry that race sponsors suffer unfairly in comparison with other sports shown on BBC Television was printed alongside a photograph of the two leading horses in last Saturday's Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup.

Both horses, like all the others in the race, were prominently displaying the sponsor's name on their saddle cloths to a television audience of three million — as well as to your readers.

Further claims that BBC racecourses are losing out compared to Channel 4 and the Racing Channel are not substantiated by viewing figures. Racing coverage on *Grandstand* remains easily the most watched, with audiences usually two or three times higher than on other channels. The peak on Channel 4 last Saturday was 800,000.

You also report an unsubstantiated claim that Julian Wilson uses BBC broadcasts as a platform for personal opposition to Sunday racing. This is untrue. Furthermore, decisions about which meetings are shown on Sundays are taken by programme management, and are largely

Rich should pull their weight

From Mr Steve Thoms

Sir, Peter Ball's observations on the Coca-Cola Cup (November 29) made sad reading to me as a supporter of a non-league (ie, non-rich) club, Wimbledon. Why should the competition lose credibility, as he states, because most of the big clubs are out? The lack of appeal to sponsors is his answer, but is the competition purely for their benefit?

Ipswich are mentioned as possible finalists — and by this kind of argument there was no credibility in their champion-

Rugby challenge

From Mr Bill Lowes

Sir, I agree with Gerald Davies (November 29) that there is a glut of high-quality rugby at present in the British Isles. Football has this all the time and yet it still manages five-figure crowds. The challenge for rugby union is to make the game a viable alternative to association football for the spectators. For far too long rugby union has been a closed shop to those who have not

played the game. We must spread the word, both playing and social, to those who have had little or no contact with the sport.

Davies should stop looking back at those insular days of the 1960s and 1970s, put his thinking cap on and find ways of attracting the outside public into the game without attracting the undesirables.

Yours faithfully,
BILL LOWES,
School House,
Braithwaite, Doncaster.

Outside agency

From Mr R. D. I. Simpson

Sir, With reference to the windowless flagstick moving a ball at rest (Sports Letters, November 22, 29), I agree that neither the Rules of Golf nor the Decisions specifically deal with the matter, but I suggest that the ball should be replaced without penalty.

A flagstick at rest on the green is simply an obstruction (cf. Decision 1-2/3). When moved by the wind it therefore becomes an outside agency, like the tumbling tumbleweed of 18-1/6 and the plastic bag of 18-1/7.

Yours faithfully,
RONALD SIMPSON,
3 Sherwood Avenue,
Ruislip, Middlesex.

Generous Haynes

From Mr Dennis Mancini

Sir, Johnny Haynes was capped 56 times for England, 22 times as captain. He has given all his caps away, but the first one from the game against Northern Ireland in Belfast when he played alongside Stanley Matthews.

Some of the caps have gone to friends but most of them to charity. Last Friday, at a fundraising evening at Fulham Football Club, a cap was auctioned and sold for £4,100. The generosity of this very special man deserves to be recorded.

Yours respectfully,
DENNIS MANCINI,
16 Rosedale Road,
Hamersmith, W6.

Peak performance

From Mr George Brink

Sir, Alix Ramsay (November 29) attacked the All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA) for its poor organisation of having league games on a Saturday and cup games on the following day.

However, the players involved in these games aspire to play in international tournaments where they will be expected to play every day for seven to ten days at a level that far exceeds AEWHA league competition.

They will also be expected to perform to a peak that will exceed the press's often unrealistic expectations of our top athletes.

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE BRINK,
338 Rugby Road,
Burbage, Hinkley,
Leicestershire.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 01752 5211. They should include a daytime telephone number.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

MARITODESPOTISM
a. A Roman Catholic sect
b. Drunkenness
c. Bullying one's wife

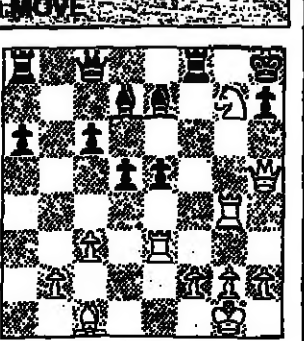
DIDAPPER
a. A napkin
b. A diving bird
c. Nary and dapper

BELOMACY
a. Living with beasts
b. Prognostication
c. Madness

STUPEFYING
a. Caratonic
b. Stupendous
c. Making stupid

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Alekhine — Borochow, California, 1932. How did White force a quick conclusion, using the open lines on the kingside to maximum effect?



Answers on page 46

Solution on page 46

CRICKET: HOLLIOAKE'S TEAM GIVE THEIR SENIORS YET ANOTHER LESSON IN THE ART OF WINNING

England A continue victorious progress

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT IN SYDNEY

SYDNEY (England A won the 10th): England A beat New South Wales by two wickets

AT LEAST one England cricket team has begun to think itself invincible. Rising obliviously above the travails of their seniors in Zimbabwe, the touring A team yesterday reversed the regular English tendency by winning a match it was far easier to lose. A stirring win it was, too.

Despite declining to 162 for seven in pursuit of 244 to beat New South Wales, Adam Hollioake's irrepressible rallied to win with three balls to spare.

A resounding cover-driven four from the unaccompanied bat of Ashley Giles kept the A team unbeaten since the opening match of their tour and drew raucous acclaim from the English majority in a meagre crowd.

The facile may say that New South Wales were without five of their Test players. The truth is that they usually are. It might also be said that Greg Matthews was a non-playing captain, as he chose neither to bat nor bowl. This, however, is but more evidence of the man's eccentricity, further ammunition for those already agitating to remove him from the captaincy. It does not detract from the character of England's win.

If the result surprised many, the fixture itself seemed to surprise the Sydney Cricket Ground, where stewards were hurrying around unlocking gates and doors 20 minutes before the start. The Test pitch was re-used and, watered and rolled, played better than on any of its previous five days, though the early start and the obvious moisture persuaded Hollioake to give the state side first innings.

Michael Slater had made only a single when he played

precisely the type of cavalier carve against a wishy outwinger that cost him his Test place. Glen Chapple profiled and, with Dean Headley bowling an impressive ten overs straight through, England took an early foothold.

Corey Richards's half-century stabilised the innings but when he was third out at 93, only 20 overs remained and England would have fondly envisaged a target of no more than 170 but for being well aware of the powers of Shane Lee.

The young Yorkshiremen in this squad believe Lee's century for Somerset at Scarborough last summer to be one of the finest they have seen and he made another now, utterly without fuss.

The long boundaries meant there was a lot of running to be done and Kevin Roberts, Lee's partner in a stand of 117 in 17 overs, made 41 without a single four. Lee required only 97 balls for his century and marked it with an enormous six to mid-wicket before falling to Hollioake in the last over.

The England reply was always up with the required run-rate but wickets were lost too regularly. Michael Vaughan was spectacularly caught down the legside off a pull he was regarding as a certain four, the gifted but fidgety Owais Shah fell to an extravagantly misjudged sweep and Anthony McGrath, looking in imperious form, wastefully mis-hit to long-on.

Gavin Robertson, the international off spinner, took a second wicket by slipping a quicker ball through Craig White and there now began a sequence of silly dismissals that all but sacrificed the match.

Mark Ealham, turning blind for a second, was run out and Warren Hegg, having missed with two frenetic



Giles clips the ball through the offside in the course of his unbeaten 39, which included the winning boundary

reverse-sweeps against Robertson, tried to cut him instead and was caught behind. Worst of all, Hollioake, who was batting so majestically he seemed to have the target personally in hand, was sent back too late by Giles and run out for 51.

Hollioake stomped off in high dudgeon but his team did not fall him, surging home on their own banana-skins. Giles, who cuts a sturdy figure and gives the ball a proportionate caning, added 40 in eight overs with Chapple and an unbroken 42 in seven with Headley. It was cricket brimming with self-belief. Those in Zimbabwe must be tempted to send for some.

Symonds forced to decide where his loyalties lie

BY PAT GIBSON

ANDREW SYMONDS has a week to make up his mind once and for all. Is he an Englishman who is ready and willing to play cricket for the country of his birth? Or is he an Australian who only wishes to wear the baggy green cap?

Symonds, who last year declined an invitation to tour Pakistan with the England A team, has now been selected to play for Australia A in a day-night match against West Indies at Melbourne next Friday.

It should be a straightforward decision for a cricketer who once described himself as "a fair dinkum Aussie" but there is one major complication. Once he plays for Australia, he will no longer be allowed to play county cricket for Gloucestershire, with whom he signed a three-year contract only last summer.

Tony Brown, administrative secretary of the Test and County Cricket Board, confirmed yesterday that a player who has appeared for one country at any level above under-17 cannot play for another for four years. And Symonds's county contract is conditional on his being available for England. "Gloucestershire have always known that this could happen," he said. "The ball is in their court."



Symonds: time to choose

"The ball is in Andrew's court, actually," Philip August, the Gloucestershire chief executive, said. "He assured us on a number of occasions that he was English and that he was going to play for England if selected, but I think most people realised that it was going to come down to the first country that picked him."

"I think he wanted to get a couple of years experience in England under his belt and then he was going to take the first option. If he had been selected for England this winter it might have been a different kettle of fish."

Not that Gloucestershire have given up hope of persuading Symonds that he is still an Englishman. By a strange twist of fate, their captain, Courtney Walsh, will be leading West Indies against Australia A and Australia will be speaking to him as well as Symonds and the player's father, Ken, in the next few days. The county will not be held to ransom, however. There is no question of Symonds replacing Walsh as the one overseas player they are allowed.

"Andrew has got a very good deal and if he is going to turn his back on that to play for Australia A it is a brave and bold decision," August said. "It would be a shame from Gloucestershire's point of view and it would probably be a shame from Andrew's because with the depth of talent Australia have got one finds it difficult to see him going further. But I suppose in our heart of hearts we always knew that it was a possibility in spite of the assurances we had been given."

Symonds, 21, was born in Birmingham but taken to Australia by his adoptive parents when he was 18 months old. He was named Young Cricketer of the Year at the end of his first season with Gloucestershire in 1995.

Looking back in anger

United States of America. Radio 4, 9.45am.

Gavin Ealer, the BBC's chief North American correspondent, employs an attention-grabbing device to launch his series about the crumbling of the American Dream. In a country doctor's home, he finds himself looking down the barrel of a 9mm semi-automatic pistol. Dr Jim is not, however, about to bump him off. "I have it for protection," he explains. It is his form of life insurance in the state of Arkansas, where going to the doctor is so bad that hospital casualty units are closed to the public. Despite this, Dr Jim has decided to give up private practice to work in that self-same hospital. He says he can no longer carry the crippling load of bureaucracy or cope with the complexities of the American health insurance system.

Wednesday, Radio 2, 7.00pm.

Only if someone twisted my arm or bribed me with a first edition of *A Christmas Carol* would I call this new panel game ground-breaking; but the festive season is fast approaching, and it would be churlish to deny that the first edition of *Wotbaggroovy* is a cheerful and diverting game. The questions are all keyed to the popular music, entertainers and personalities of the news during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The panellists are Wendy Richard, Bernard Cribbins, Toyah Wilcock and Jeffrey Holland. Johnnie Walker is the besieged master of ceremonies.

Peter Daville

RADIO 1

7.00am Chris Evans. 9.00am Simon Mayo. 10.00am Golden Hour. 12.00pm Lisa. 1.00pm. Includes: 12.30pm-12.45 News. 1.45pm-2.00pm. 2.00pm-2.15pm. 2.15pm-2.30pm. 2.30pm-2.45pm. 2.45pm-3.00pm. 3.00pm-3.15pm. 3.15pm-3.30pm. 3.30pm-3.45pm. 3.45pm-4.00pm. 4.00pm-4.15pm. 4.15pm-4.30pm. 4.30pm-4.45pm. 4.45pm-5.00pm. 5.00pm-5.15pm. 5.15pm-5.30pm. 5.30pm-5.45pm. 5.45pm-6.00pm. 6.00pm-6.15pm. 6.15pm-6.30pm. 6.30pm-6.45pm. 6.45pm-7.00pm. 7.00pm-7.15pm. 7.15pm-7.30pm. 7.30pm-7.45pm. 7.45pm-8.00pm. 8.00pm-8.15pm. 8.15pm-8.30pm. 8.30pm-8.45pm. 8.45pm-9.00pm. 9.00pm-9.15pm. 9.15pm-9.30pm. 9.30pm-9.45pm. 9.45pm-10.00pm. 10.00pm-10.15pm. 10.15pm-10.30pm. 10.30pm-10.45pm. 10.45pm-11.00pm. 11.00pm-11.15pm. 11.15pm-11.30pm. 11.30pm-11.45pm. 11.45pm-12.00pm. 12.00pm-12.15pm. 12.15pm-12.30pm. 12.30pm-12.45pm. 12.45pm-1.00pm. 1.00pm-1.15pm. 1.15pm-1.30pm. 1.30pm-1.45pm. 1.45pm-1.60pm. 1.60pm-1.75pm. 1.75pm-1.90pm. 1.90pm-2.05pm. 2.05pm-2.20pm. 2.20pm-2.35pm. 2.35pm-2.50pm. 2.50pm-2.65pm. 2.65pm-2.80pm. 2.80pm-2.95pm. 2.95pm-3.10pm. 3.10pm-3.25pm. 3.25pm-3.40pm. 3.40pm-3.55pm. 3.55pm-4.10pm. 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Hillsborough: look back in anger and sorrow

Very occasionally there occurs on television an event which defies the cold judgement of the head, bypasses the intellectual analysis of the mind and goes straight for the heart. Such an event came along last night in the form of *Hillsborough* (TV), a drama-documentary about the events of April 15, 1989, when 95 people died at the Sheffield Wednesday football ground.

Hillsborough is the work of Jimmy McGovern, author of *Cracker*. McGovern is a Liverpoolian and he has made a crusade of finding the truth of that awful day and getting it on to the screen. The result is biased in the best sense, in that it takes the side of the fans, who have been too long ignored.

It is also selective. Even in two hours, no one could possibly tell the whole story. But above all *Hillsborough* is a magnificent drama, acutely written, well-researched and directed with taut

panache by Charles McDougall. As if that is not enough, there is a further reason for welcoming *Hillsborough*: it is the nearest the victims and their families are likely to get to true justice.

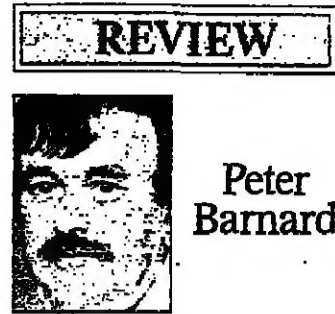
McGovern's script is based on coroner's court transcripts and the testimony of people who were involved. It is harrowing (and it is clearly meant to be) but McGovern consistently avoids shock tactics: there are few scenes of mayhem, no scenes of bloody carnage. But there is anger and sorrow in vast quantities. There is a spartan quality to the piece which only adds to its effectiveness.

Actors play all the parts, except where news footage is used of the actual incident. The facts are that Liverpool had begun an FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest but the game was soon abandoned. A far greater drama was being played out at the Leppings Lane end of the ground,

where too many Liverpool supporters had been packed into too little space.

It may be that *Hillsborough* is biased, but that does not make it inaccurate. The truth told by the police have been well documented. The outrageous stories planted in certain newspapers by police officers have long since been exposed. The police said that Liverpool fans had "smashed down a gate" when in fact the police themselves had ordered the opening of the gate. The police said the Liverpool supporters were drunk. Lord Justice Taylor found that "drunkenness was not a major factor" and that there had been "a failure of police control".

There was also, as McGovern demonstrates, a failure of cultural comprehension. When fans began to climb the fences behind the pitch to get out of the crush, this was assumed to be a pitch invasion.



Peter Barnard

Long after it was apparent that this was a disaster, ambulances were still being kept outside the ground. When one paramedic asked to be let in, a police officer told him: No, they're still fighting in there. Nobody had been fighting.

McGovern graphically demonstrates that the police on duty were obsessed with the image of certain football fans, somewhat understandable given the hooligan ex-

cesses of the 1980s, rather than the reality on the day. Trevor Hicks, one of the central characters, who is played by Christopher Eccleston, was at the game with his two teenage daughters, Sarah and Vicki. Both the girls died. Within minutes, a police officer asked Hicks: "How much did you have to drink?"

The man in charge of the police operation at Hillsborough was David Duckenfield. Lord Justice Taylor said of him that he "failed to take effective control" and caused "grave offence" by spreading an untrue allegation that fans had smashed down a gate.

I am not normally enamoured of drama-documentary, but with assiduous research wedded to a tremendous passion, McGovern has produced a piece of work which will serve as a testament for the Hillsborough families. It is the least compensation they deserve

and, likely, the most they will get. By comparison with *Hillsborough*, last night's *Dispatches* (Channel 4) almost qualified as light relief. But here was a scandal of a different order, concerning the vetted question of how much taxpayers' money is being spent on slaughtering cows, mad and potentially so. Too much, according to the programme, a view which even people in the slaughtering business seemed to confirm.

When the scheme started, slaughterhouses were paid £87.50 per head of cattle. Quite how the figure was arrived at is not clear. But abattoirs all over the country were willing to do the job for as little as £30 a head, indeed some offered to do it for nothing and make their money out of selling the hides at £25 each.

The Ministry of Agriculture seems to have been so anxious to

get on with the job that it agreed to pay a premium rate. Only one organisation representing slaughterhouses, the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers, was on the ad hoc committee put in charge of the cull and federation members were given 80 per cent of the work.

Paul Trench, the Liberal Democrat agriculture spokesman, told the programme: "I cannot think of any sectorial interest, particularly one that is going to benefit so directly from taxpayers' money, that was in such a powerful position to take control of public policy."

And Dr Richard North, a food safety adviser, said: "The ultimate irony is that a scheme which was not recommended by the Government's own scientists, was not wanted by farmers, is not understood by consumers, is not wanted by farmers, is going to do irreparable damage to the meat industry and farming, and will cost the taxpayers a fortune."

- 6.00am BUSINESS BREAKFAST (25508)**
7.00am BBC BREAKFAST NEWS (1) (56877)
9.00am BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA (1) (112254)
9.30am STYLE CHALLENGE (4005273)
9.45am KILROY (6831322)
10.30am CAN'T YOU WON'T COOK (25322)
11.00am NEWS (1) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (3531508)
11.05am THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW (5532419)
11.45am SMILLIE'S PEOPLE (9137910)
12.00am NEWS (1) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (3531508)
12.05pm ALIAS SMITH AND JONES (1) (8452070)
12.55pm THE WEATHER SHOW (35089341)
1.00pm NEWS (1) and weather (59964)
1.30pm REGIONAL NEWS (90274790)
1.40pm NEWS (1) (29982505)
2.00pm CALL MY BLUFF (1) (8167)
2.30pm PETER SEABROOK'S GARDENING WEEK (728)
3.00pm INCOGNITO (8902)
3.30pm ANTS IN YOUR PANTS (5148254) 3.50pm Dear Mr Barker (4063047) 4.05pm The Family Ness (2252490) 4.10pm The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest (1070728) 4.35pm Grange Hill (759341) 5.00pm Newsround (1) (5417902) 5.10pm Blue Peter (1) (8726708)
5.30pm NEIGHBOURS (1) (1) (88507)
6.00pm NEWS (1) and weather (457)
6.30pm REGIONAL NEWS (709)
7.00pm THIS IS YOUR LIFE Presented by Michael Aspel (4493)
7.30pm TOP OF THE POPS (1) (893)
8.00pm ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES: The Class of '82 Del is invited to a reunion at his old school. With David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst (1) (1) (82677)
8.50pm MORE ANTIQUES ROADSHOW: GEMS: Antiques Roadshow presents a selection of Roadshow finds from the archives, including the popular rabbit-in-a-cabbage (1) (239167)
9.00pm NINE O'CLOCK NEWS (1) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (6148)
9.30pm HETTY WAINTROPP: Chords from finalists for the Golden Voice start cooking. Hetty investigates. With Patricia Routledge (35877)
10.20pm FILM: The Boys (1983) with Jamie Lee Curtis, Peter Gallagher and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer. A mother who deserted her husband and three children three years before decides she wants them all back. Directed by Yves Simoneau (5994490) WALSLEY: 10.30pm The Williams - Song Book (650 FILM: Mother's Boys (1995) FILM: Deceptions (1990) with Hanny Hanin and Nicola Sheridan. Beautiful Adrienne Erickson shoots dead a burglar, only to find it is her wealthy husband. Story homicide detective Nick Gentry and his cynical partner investigate. Directed by Ruben Preuss (18419)
1.35pm WEATHER (559585)

- 8.00am OPEN UNIVERSITY: Hierarchy and the Scottish (704438) 8.30am Classical Sculpture and the Enlightenment (7016273) 8.50am Citizens of the World (8202235) 9.15am See Hear Breakfast News (2249322) 9.30am Yaky Duck (8175508) 9.50am Smart (5171322) 10.15am Charlie Chalk (7251815) 10.35am The Record (8214728) 10.50am The World's Worst (113854)**
9.15am ASSIGNMENT EARTH (5623341)
10.00am PLAYDAYS (2675273)
10.25pm THE CHAMPIONS (8419148) 11.15pm The Phil Stevens Show (1171910) 11.40pm Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars (845903) 12.00pm Kan-Hom's Hot Work (47544)
12.30pm WORKING LUNCH (1.15pm) 1.00pm Charlie Chalk (9999070) 1.15pm The Hollywood Collection (854977) 2.05pm Pride of Dress (705703)
2.15pm SPORT ON FRIDAY: Helen Roddison introduces highlights of the final round from the LPGA golf tour championships from Las Vegas (584167)
3.55pm NEWS (1) regional news and weather (6171612) 4.00pm Today's the Day (322) 4.30pm Ready, Steady, Cook (506) 5.00pm Father (8761) 5.30pm Going, Going, Gone (118) 5.00pm The Murrins (544) (1) (534781)
6.25pm UFO: The Square Triangle A woman discovers she has murdered an alien (1) (217895)
7.15pm ELECTRIC CIRCUS Entertainment news (402506)
7.30pm TOP GEAR MOTORSPORT: Tiff Needell reports on the first race at China's new Zhuhai track and the Master Rally reaches Mongolia. Damon Hill and Tommi Meeklen reflect on their success in Formula One and the World Rally Championships (1) (235)
8.00pm GLUCK, GLUCK, GLUCK: Malcolm Gluck debunks some wine industry myths. Tonight he compares the different approaches of new and old winemakers (1) (7273)
8.30pm STEFAN BUCZACKI'S GARDENING: BRITAIN The gardens of Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland (1) (8780)

- 8.00pm SHOOTING STARS Comedy quiz. Tonight's guests include singer Donna Aik, comedienne Monwenia Banks and Griff Rhye Jones and actor Stephen Tompkinson (7490)**
9.30pm RED DWARF VI: The Dwarves need replacement engine parts (1) (1) (55051)
10.00pm HAVE I GOT NEWS FOR YOU: The guests are Neil Morison, Martin Clunes and Claire Rayner (48273)
10.30pm NEWSNIGHT (1) (846099)
11.15pm THE A FORCE: Back entertainment hosted by Felix Dexter (428167)
1.15pm FILM: Walpurgis Night (1993) with Lars Hanson and Ingrid Bergman. Directed by Gustaf Edgren (8727674)

- Shooting Stars BBC2, 9.00pm**
 The spoof game show takes a sensational new twist as Mark Lamarr, resident team captain and keeper of the straightest of straight facts, laughs. Not once but several times. *Shooting Stars* has lost one of its most durable running gags. But additions should not despair. Ulrika Jonsson still giggles at the merest provocation, the guests (tonight they are Stephen Tompkinson, Donnie Air, Morwen Banks and Griff Rhye Jones) continue to be gently humiliated and Max Lucas's bizarre baby-adult keeps the scores. And Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer remain gloriously anarchic or shrill and unfunny. Depending on whether you subscribe to the cult. For cult it is, which means a committed following but a minority one. Reeves, who models himself on Eric Morecambe, must pine for his idol's viewing figures.
- Staying Alive ITV, 9.00pm**
 There are so many loose ends at the finish of this final episode that a second series may be on the stocks. Whether it is deserved is another matter, and if there has been reason to enjoy in this sexual merry-go-round among student nurses, this may not have been in the way the makers of the series intended. The big moment tonight is at the nurses' barbecue party when Sister Felicity (Lynne Vernal) announces to Dr Sordil (Ayub Khan-Dani) that she is not wearing any knickers. Sadly for her, the intended seduction misfires, for in keeping with the general drift of the show his eyes are already wandering elsewhere. Meanwhile, mad Michaela (Susannah Wise) is threatening more dark deeds in the intensive care unit, which at least drums up a bit of suspense and makes a change from trying to remember who was last having an affair with whom.
- Hetty Wainthropp Investigates: Lost Chords BBC1, 9.30pm**
 The Blairnath Musical Festival has been running for half a century but this year somebody is trying to ruin it. One by one the contestants for the Golden Voice competition, which carries a £500 prize and the chance of a career in television commercials, are pulling out because they have mysteriously lost their voices. It could be a virus but this is a detective series and Patricia Routledge's Hetty has a villain to unravel. The first target is a tough old Agatha Christie in the Wainthropp stories will refresh the generous array of suspects, each with a convincing motive, and the Poirot-like method by which the puzzle is solved. The difference is that in Agatha Christie people get murdered, sometimes several in the same story. The case of the Lanchashire OAP are a gentler type of entertainment.
- The Adam and Joe Show Channel 4, 12.00am**
 Anybody still watching television at such an unsocial hour will be rewarded with this oddball comedy show in which Joe Cornish and Adam Buxton sound off from a bed in a rooming house. Their targets are drawn from popular culture, with regular swipes at films, records, magazines and food. A soft toy version of *Trainspotting*, complete with the foul language, is a good indication of what to expect, and there is more bad taste in a look at recent moments from air crash movies. Further justification for hiding the show away in the small hours comes in a sketch about visiting a urinal. But Cornish and Buxton do have a gentler, wittier streak, and are capable of being funny as well as provocative.

- 6.00pm GMTV (7154341)**
9.25pm SUPERMARKET SWEEP (4080664)
9.55pm REGIONAL NEWS (2652322)
10.00pm THE TIME... THE PLACE (37254)
10.30pm THIS MORNING (80991761)
12.20pm REGIONAL NEWS (2874657)
12.30pm NEWS (1) and weather (9897188)
12.55pm MURDER, SHE WROTE (1) (9726235)
2.00pm Home and Away (1) (2491730)
2.25pm Crossroads (1) (17262457) 2.55pm Van Can Cook - The Best of China (7485506)
3.20pm NEWS (7385896)
3.25pm REGIONAL NEWS (7384167)
3.30pm JAYS WORLD (8802489) 3.40pm Zzzap! Christmas Annals (6707493) 3.55pm Oscar and Friends (8175436) 4.00pm Snug and Cool (8584691) 4.15pm Horizons (1054167) 4.40pm Fun House (1030341)
5.10pm A COUNTRY PRACTICE (7541709)
5.40pm NEWS and weather (1) (38183)
6.00pm HOME AND AWAY (1) (981915)
6.25pm HTV NEWS (1) (741790)
7.00pm CATCHPHRASE presented by Roy Walker (5051)
7.30pm CORONATION STREET: Will Mike Bickard's photography place Tricia's job in jeopardy? (1) (761)

- As HTV West except:**
12.55pm HOME AND AWAY (9862877)
1.25pm CROSS WITS (30513438)
1.55pm A COUNTRY PRACTICE (29986708)
5.10-5.40pm SHORTLAND STREET (7541709)
6.25-7.00pm CENTRAL NEWS (741790)
10.40pm CENTRAL WEEKEND (2641506)
12.10pm SLEDGE HAMMER (2592378)
12.40pm COMEDY CENTRAL (7460378)
1.40pm THE GOOD SEX GUIDE... LATE (5558113)
2.45pm CYBERCAFE (4150216)
3.10pm HELTER SKELTER (520262)
4.00pm JOBBINDER (5610620)
- As HTV West except:**
12.55pm CORONATION STREET (9862877)
1.25-1.55pm CROSS WITS (30513438)
1.55pm HOME AND AWAY (21512490)
2.25pm HIGH ROAD (17262457)
2.55-3.20pm GARDENERS' DIARY (7485506)
5.10-5.40pm HOME AND AWAY (7541709)
6.00-7.00pm WESTCOUNTRY LIVE (47032)
10.30pm WESTCOUNTRY NEWS (145983)
10.45pm FILM: WITH HOSTILE INTENT (5198148)
- As HTV West except:**
12.55-1.25pm CROSS WITS (9862877)
1.25pm HOME AND AWAY (30513438)
1.55pm A COUNTRY PRACTICE (29986708)
5.10-5.40pm HOME AND AWAY (7541709)
6.00-7.00pm MERIDIAN TONIGHT (47032)
10.45pm COASTGUARD RESCUE (336542)
11.15pm ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS (58065)
11.45pm SHORT STORY CINEMA (587780)
5.00pm FREESCREEN (49194)
- As HTV West except:**
12.55pm-1.25pm CROSS WITS (9862877)
1.25pm HOME AND AWAY (30513438)
1.55pm JUSTICE OF THE LAND (21512490)
2.25-3.20pm MURDER, SHE WROTE (9616235)
5.10-5.40pm SHORTLAND STREET (7541709)
6.30-7.00pm ANGLIA NEWS (877)
10.40pm SHORT SHARP SHOCKS (418341)
10.50pm FILM: ERIK THE VIKING (45572815)

- VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode**
 The numbers next to the video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ remote control. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of Gemstar Development Ltd.
- SKY 1**
7.00pm Love Connection (4020561) 7.30pm Piece Your Luck (4530118) 7.40pm Jeopardy! (272723) 8.10pm Hotel (2023032) 9.00pm Another World (501885) 9.30pm Ozzy Osbourne (747457) 10.00pm The View (2023032) 10.30pm The View (2023032) 10.50pm The View (2023032) 11.00pm The View (2023032) 11.30pm The View (2023032) 11.50pm The View (2023032) 12.00pm The View (2023032) 12.30pm The View (2023032) 12.50pm The View (2023032) 1.00pm The View (2023032) 1.30pm The View (2023032) 1.50pm The View (2023032) 2.00pm The View (2023032) 2.30pm The View (2023032) 2.50pm The View (2023032) 3.00pm The View (2023032) 3.30pm The View (2023032) 3.50pm The View (2023032) 4.00pm The View (2023032) 4.30pm The View (2023032) 4.50pm The View (2023032) 5.00pm The View (2023032) 5.30pm The View (2023032) 5.50pm The View (2023032) 6.00pm The View (2023032) 6.30pm The View (2023032) 6.50pm The View (2023032) 7.00pm The View (2023032) 7.30pm The View (2023032) 7.50pm The View (2023032) 8.00pm The View (2023032) 8.30pm The View (2023032) 8.50pm The View (2023032) 9.00pm The View (2023032) 9.30pm The View 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